



World War II Wargames Rules

ACTION
SECOND EDITION



CAMPAIGN THE ROAD TO BERLIN





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CAMPAIGN: **THE ROAD TO BERLIN**



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Warlord Games
The Howitt Wing, Lenton Business Centre, Lenton Boulevard, Nottingham, NG7 2BY, UK

E-mail: info@warlordgames.com

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Editor's Note

For ease of comparison please refer to the following conversion table:

1 mile = 1.6km
1yd = 0.9m
1ft = 0.3m
1in = 2.54cm/25.4mm
1 gallon (Imperial) = 4.5 litres
1lb = 0.45kg

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CONTENTS

The Road To Berlin	4	Clearing The Flanks	69
		The South	70
OPERATION BAGRATION	7	The North	71
		Duel in Finland	71
FIGHTING BAGRATION	13	SCENARIO 7: BREAKOUT FROM PETSAMO	72
Scenarios	13		
Special Rules for Bagration Scenarios	14	The Vistula-Oder Offensive	75
Bagration Special Scenarios	14		
An Unequal Struggle	14	FIGHTING THE VISTULA-ODER OFFENSIVE	81
BAGRATION THEATRE SELECTORS	15	General Scenarios	81
The Forlorn Hope Theatre Selector	16	Vistula-Oder Scenarios	83
3rd Guards Tank Corps Theatre Selector	18	VISTULA-ODER OFFENSIVE THEATRE SELECTORS	84
53rd Guards tank Brigade Theatre Selector	18	SCENARIO 8: 'THE IVAN'S ARE COMING...'	85
German Heavy Tank Abteilung Theatre Selector	19	SCENARIO 9: RACE TO THE PILECA RIVER	88
5th Panzer Division Theatre Selector	20	SCENARIO 10: AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER	92
Additional German Units	22		
SCENARIO 1: THE TIGERS OF KRUPKI	25	Operation Berlin	96
SCENARIO 2: THE BATTLE OF PLESHCHENITSY	28		
SCENARIO 3: THE '34'	31	FIGHTING OPERATION BERLIN	105
		Scenarios	106
Lvov-Sandomierz Offensive	34	General Scenarios	106
		Special Rules for Operation Berlin Scenarios	106
FIGHTING THE LVOV-SANDOMIERZ OFFENSIVE	37	OPERATION BERLIN THEATRE SELECTORS	109
Scenarios	37	Extended Last Levy Theatre Selector	109
Special Rules for Lvov-Sandomierz Scenarios	37	The Replacement Panzer Force	109
Lvov-Sandomierz Scenarios	37	Additional German Units	110
LVOV-SANDOMIERZ THEATRE SELECTORS	38	The German Replacement Army	110
SCENARIO 4: BIG GAME HUNTING	38	Heroes of the Soviet Union: Junior Sergeant Vasily Kharinaevich	115
Heroes of the Soviet Union: Lt. Aleksandr P. Oskin	42	Khantaev	115
		SCENARIO 11: THE SEELOW HEIGHTS	116
The Warsaw Uprising	43	SCENARIO 12: TANK HUNTING	120
		SCENARIO 13: BERLIN: CROSSING THE SPREE	123
FIGHTING THE WARSAW UPRISING	49		
Scenarios	50	The Prague Uprising	126
Special Rules for Warsaw Uprising Scenarios	50		
Warsaw Uprising Special Scenarios	50	FIGHTING THE PRAGUE UPRISING	130
Warsaw Uprising Theatre Selectors	50	Scenarios	130
Armia Krajowa Theatre Selector	50	General Scenarios	130
Additional Armia Krajowa Units	52	Prague Scenarios	132
Notes on Using Captured Enemy Vehicles	55	The ROA	132
Additional German Warsaw Uprising Units	55	ROA THEATRE SELECTOR	133
SCENARIO 5: MAN THE BARRICADES	56	Additional Units	133
SCENARIO 6: KUBUS AND THE GREY WOLF	60	SCENARIO 14: THE PRAGUE UPRISING: ENTER THE ROA	134
The Struggle Continues	64	APPENDICES: ADDITIONAL SPECIAL RULES	136
		SNOW, MUD, ICE AND FROSTBITE	137
FIGHTING 'THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES'	65	DUG-IN: FOXHOLES, TRENCHES AND GUN PITS	139
Scenarios	65	MINEFIELDS	141
Special Rules for Ghost War Scenarios	65	CITY FIGHTING	145
The Struggle Continues Theatre Selectors	66		
NKVD Theatre Selector	66		
NKVD Additional Units	68		

THE ROAD TO BERLIN





In June 1944 the Axis powers in Europe were about to be subjected to two major hammer blows. In the West, the final preparations were being made for Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Western Europe. In the East, the Red Army was planning a massive offensive, with bold objectives to critically damage the German Army and eject it entirely from the Soviet Union and, by pushing deep into Poland, providing the springboard for later offensives that would eventually find the Red Army in the streets of Berlin ushering in the final collapse of Hitler's Third Reich. The war in the East was now in its third year and the writing was on the wall for Germany. To a large extent, the course of the war on the Eastern Front in its first year and a half had been a catalogue of crushing German victories over their Red Army foes. Since the opening of Operation Barbarossa in May 1941, the Wehrmacht had advanced deep into the territory of the Soviet Union, had briefly been at the gates of Moscow, and at the end of 1942 was besieging the two major city bastions of the Soviet north and south, Leningrad and

Stalingrad. Despite the rebuttal at the gates of Moscow (due as much to the harsh winter conditions as the brave and solid defence of the Red Army) it seemed to many neutral observers that the defeat and collapse of the Soviet Union was inevitable. Yet, within six months, conditions had decisively and irrevocably changed.

In February 1943, the shattering defeat at Stalingrad and the virtual annihilation of the 6th Army, which at that point had been the largest organised formation in the Wehrmacht, had enormous impacts on the armies of both sides. For the Germans a sense of fatalism began to grow, whilst amongst the Soviets spirits rose. After the months of crushing defeats, encirclements and mass capitulations, the Germans were finally revealed to be beatable and their aura of invincibility had finally been ripped aside. This is well illustrated by a common story from the end of the Stalingrad operations where Soviet troops harassing sullen German prisoners, pointed at the remains of the devastated city and screamed that it would only be a matter of time before Berlin resembled the ruins of Stalingrad.

Soviet Assault Engineer Squad



1943 also featured Operation Zitadelle, with the Battle of Kursk probably representing the last chance for Germany to regain the initiative by obtaining a victory on a massive scale and destroying a large part of the Red Army. The to and fro nature of the summer 1943 campaigns resulted in many gains and losses for both sides but crucially saw the creation of a large salient or bulge of Soviet forces centred on the city of Kursk. Whilst a potential jumping off point for a new Soviet offensive, it was also viewed as a golden opportunity by German strategists bringing back halcyon memories of the successful 1941 and 1942 offensives. Armoured assaults from the north and south of the salient could trap hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops and tanks. Whilst perhaps not winning the war in the East, it promised to delay future Soviet offensives for at least a year. On the contrary, Kursk and its aftermath were to prove that everything had changed and German prospects on the Eastern Front were dire and in all probability terminal.

The Soviet army of 1943 was not the same as that had faced the Barbarossa invasion of two years before. It was led by competent, and in many case exceptional, officers at all levels from junior unit leaders all the way up to marshals of the Red Army. These men had learned their art in the heat of battle. The incompetent survivors of the 1930s political purges had been weeded out – either lying dead on the battlefield, or residing in German POW camps. Soviet head of state and, technically, Commander of the Red Army Josef Stalin had also finally understood that he need not interfere in every single military decision.

Constantly paranoid of a challenge from his senior officers, he had orchestrated some of the worst military setbacks of the Red Army in the early months of the campaign with demands of 'no retreat' even when his few able generals were telling him otherwise.

Exceptional generals such as Zhukov, Konev and Rokossovsky flourished and proved themselves easily the equal of their German counterparts. They had closely studied German strategic and operational tactics at very close range and had learned to not only counter them but, far more importantly, to anticipate them.

By the time of the Kursk operation the Soviet High command – the STAVKA – knew exactly what the Germans were planning and formulated a strategy to both blunt the offensive and launch a series of follow-on counter-attacks.

When the German attack finally fell on the salient, their carefully marshalled concentrations of armour – many of which were the new and effective Tigers and Panthers – did not find themselves fighting inferior Soviet armour, but rather dug-in infantry supported by huge numbers of artillery and dedicated anti-tank guns on a battlefield liberally sown with huge minefields and anti-tank traps.

Only later did the Germans find out that relatively small amounts of enemy armour were present. The vast majority were waiting in the wings to deliver two crushing counter-offensives forcing the Germans to call off the entire operation and immediately go on the defensive as the entire Army Group South had to be pulled back.

OPERATION BAGRATION



Following the German disaster of Kursk, the Soviets unleashed a series of operations designed to throw the Germans out of the Soviet Union. In August 1943, Operation *Polkovodets Rumyantsev* liberated Kharkov in the fourth and final battle fought over that beleaguered city. The flat steppes of the Ukraine provided open terrain for the Soviet mechanised forces, which chased the Germans back to the only natural defensive feature to be found, the River Dnepr. By October the Red Army was able to create a few small bridgeheads on the western side. However, so rapid had been the advances that many German and Rumanian troops had been cut off and isolated in the Crimean Peninsula and would remain there until they surrendered. In parallel offensives against German Army Groups Centre and North, the Red Army pushed their foes from western Russia into the Baltic States and Byelorussia. Even further north the siege of Leningrad was finally lifted after 900 days.

To the dismay of the Germans, the Soviets mounted a

fresh set of winter offensives to outflank the German Dnepr line. A large offensive along the southern side of the Pripyat Marshes outflanked the line as it pushed towards the Polish border. A turn to the south threatened to completely disrupt the German defenders, who again found themselves in rapid retreat. In December, the city of Kiev fell as the Germans retreated to the River Bug.

In late January 1944 a large force of Germans was encircled at Korsun, but for once a successful escape was engineered by Erich von Manstein, whose 3rd Panzer Corps broke the encirclement and extricated 30,000 troops at great cost.

True to form, Hitler put the entire blame for the losses of 1943 on his generals, who he despised for perceived cowardice and lack of will. Even Manstein, the architect of the relief of Korsun, was relieved of command and branded a defeatist for simply trying to persuade the Führer that a defensive strategy was the only way to stabilise the Eastern Front.

Red Army Headquarters plan their new offensive



PLANNING FOR BAGRATION

Stalin was aware that the Allies would open up the second front in Europe in the late spring of 1944 and it became important that after all the shedding of Soviet blood, the Red Army would be first into Berlin. Stalin wanted Berlin as a symbol of the defeat of National Socialism by Communism and his own personal triumph over Hitler. Of the options presented by STAVKA in early 1944, a strike through Byelorussia and into Poland was the most direct route to Berlin. Stalin's advisors were also aware that the Germans had greatly reinforced the Ukrainian Front and many of the Red Army units there were depleted and exhausted from their advances of the previous year.

Although the Byelorussian terrain would favour the defender and slow down advances, it was reasoned that if overwhelming numerical superiority could be targeted at Army Group Centre, it would either be forced to fall back or be destroyed in detail. Of course,

Hitler's obsession to never retreat made the latter all the more likely.

MASKIROVKA: FOOLING THE GERMANS

STAVKA knew that it was essential to ensure the Germans did not reinforce Army Group Centre before the attack. The Soviets used the art of *maskirovka* ('military deception') to its highest level. Troop movements were conducted at night whilst formations lay camouflaged during the day. Any radio communications were strictly limited, and aggressive Soviet Air Force patrols curtailed German aerial reconnaissance. To convince the Germans that the blow would fall in the Ukraine, movement orders were leaked indicating heavy troop movements to the south. Up to the start of the offensive, the Germans grossly underestimated the threat Army Group Centre was facing. Any views to the contrary were labelled scaremongering and alarmist by the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW).

The Germans were also becoming fixated on the imminent Allied invasion of Western Europe. A quick defeat of the invasion was seen to be essential and seven panzer divisions were transferred to the West whilst others were kept in deep reserve so they could be quickly deployed westwards. Most defensive fighters and mobile anti-aircraft artillery had also been withdrawn to bolster the defence of the Reich, virtually surrendering air superiority to the Soviet Air Force in summer 1944.

UNLEASHING THE BEAR

On 22 June, three years to the day after Barbarossa, company and battalion-sized units of the Red Army began a reconnaissance in force. These activities were designed to entice German forces into their forward trench works, to become the first targets of the Soviet artillery barrage.

Operation Bagration commenced at 05:00 on 23 June as the Russians unleashed their Red God of War artillery barrages. These lasted nearly two hours and were described as being of an intensity and destructiveness never before seen.

The forward trenches were hit for 20 minutes. Most guns were provided with 160 rounds, which for many represented an ammo load of over six tons. German counter-battery fire was quickly suppressed and so intense was the dust and smoke thrown up that many raids by the Soviet Air Force had to be called off due to lack of visibility.

German forward trenches were simply blown apart. A brief silence descended over the battlefield only to be broken by the cheers of Soviet infantry as they began their attack. To assist the breaching of extensive minefields, many newly arrived PT-34 mine-roller tanks were



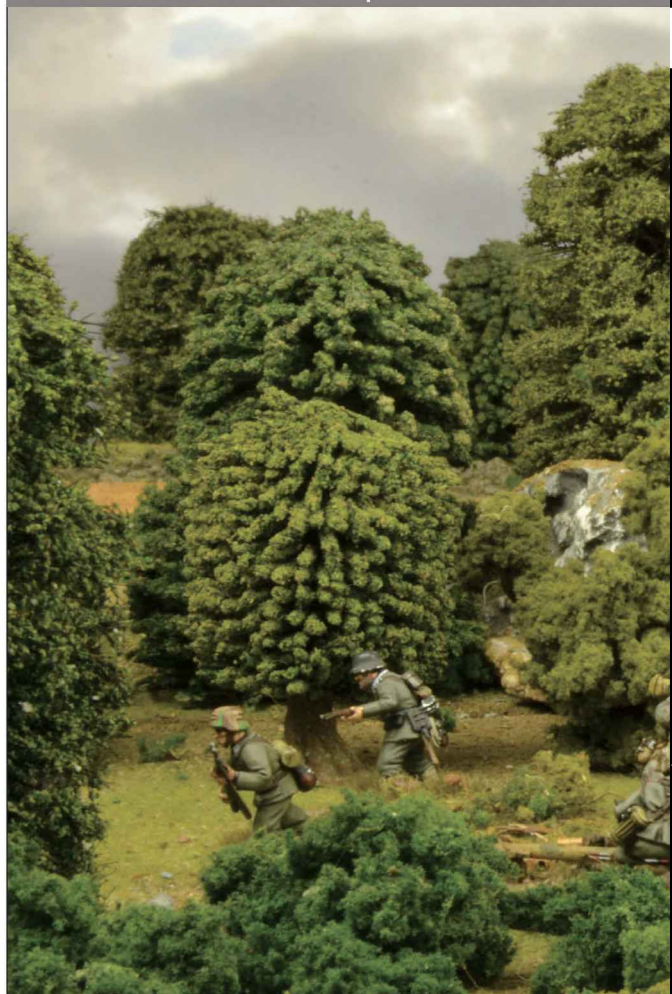
deployed. In particularly well-defended areas, KV-1 or IS-2 heavy tanks were employed along with many heavy self-propelled artillery pieces as breakthrough units. The infantry attacks were no longer the unsophisticated mass charges of the early war period; effective assault tactics were used by hardened veterans. Rather than leading the assault, tank forces waited to follow the Infantry and exploit any breakthroughs.

THE NORTHERN THRUST

In the north, the combined assaults of the 1st Baltic and the 3rd Byelorussian Fronts smashed through the initial defences and were moving on Vitebsk, where the German 53rd Corps and 3rd Panzer Army were in great danger from an encircling pincer movement. German commanders asked for reinforcements but none were released from the Ukraine as the OKW still believed this was where the main attack would fall. When those same commanders then asked for permission to withdraw, they were rebuffed by the Hitler directive of 'No retreat'. By the night of June 23/24, the Soviet 4th Assault Army had broken the defences and pushed the defenders back. In retreat, the 9th Corps blew many of the bridges over the Dvina River, isolating the 53rd Corps and blocking key retreat routes from the beleaguered town. As it became clear that this corps was about to be cut off, more desperate requests for permission to break out were made. Eventually OKW relented, but insisted that one division must stay behind and fight to the death, but the break out was shambolic as powerful Soviet units prevented German formations staying together and the 53rd Corps broke up into small isolated units desperately fleeing west. Many of these were mopped up by regular Red Army forces, but many were small enough to be set upon by partisan groups. Nearly 30,000 Germans were killed or captured – a scene soon to be repeated elsewhere.

Attacks to the south against the German 4th Army to secure parts of the Moscow–Minsk highway near Orsha were not successful initially. They met determined defence in the form of the 78th Sturm Division, whose 8,000 men and large concentrations of artillery were supported by 20 deadly Nashorn tank destroyers armed with an 88mm PaK 43/41 anti-tank gun. Thirty StuG IIIs completed the division. The Panzerfaust anti-tank rocket was also effectively used by the Sturm Division and Soviet tank casualties began to grow. However, the overwhelming superiority of numbers enjoyed by the Red Army began to tell as two rifle divisions probed around the north and threatened the defenders' supply lines. Threatened with isolation the German 27th Corps needed to pull back to lines of defence along the Dnepr River. On this occasion, the corps commander circumvented Hitler's orders by

Soviet KV-1s flank German anti-tank positions.



simply not making a request and managed to get his troops out before Orsha fell.

With frontline defences collapsing in the north and the Dnepr and Dvina River lines breached, the fall of Orsha allowed the Soviets to let loose both 5th Guards Tank Army and the 2nd Guards Tank Corps in a race to the next potential defensive positions before Minsk on the Berezina River. The ongoing collapse of Army Group Centre finally persuaded OKW that Bagration was a major attack. They belatedly released reinforcements including the 5th Panzer Division with its 70 Panthers, 55 Panzer IVs and 30 Tiger Is from Army Group North Ukraine.

THE SOUTH

After a very slow first day held up by excessively swampy ground, the 1st Byelorussian Front advanced towards Minsk from the south. To counter this, General Jordan was given permission to release 20th Panzer Division, his last mobile reserve. Like other German formations this



was only a ghost of its paper strength, possessing just over 50 Panzer IVs. They finally contacted Soviet forces south of Bobruisk and reportedly destroyed 60 Soviet tanks, but lost half their own number. This was disastrous, as the advance on Bobruisk threatened to cut off many German formations east of the Berezina River. The Russians secured the bridges and trapped most of the 9th Army's divisions. A desperate flight back to

Berlin to appeal the 'No retreat' order only resulted in Generalfeldmarschall Busch, Commander-in-Chief of Army Group Centre, being relieved of command and replaced by Model.



German Tiger I

Forty thousand German troops were trapped and a series of disjointed break-out attempts were made under the twin hammers of Soviet artillery and ground attack aircraft, with losses of over 15,000 men.

Bobruisk was surrounded and in the space of a week, the 1st Byelorussian Front had destroyed over 350 armoured vehicles, 2,500 guns and killed or captured more than 70,000 troops.

MINSK IS LIBERATED

Minsk was now being advanced upon by two entire Red Army Fronts with only 5th Panzer Division bolstering the crumbling defences. Hitler's refusal to allow any ordered withdrawal meant that German troops falling back on Minsk were unarmed, demoralised stragglers who could not be effectively drafted into the defence. Some of the largest instances of armoured combat during Bagration took place on the city outskirts when 5th Panzer and the heavy tanks of the 512th Heavy Tank Battalion took on the 5th Guards Tank Army in a series of pyrrhic victories. Although nearly 300 Soviet tanks were destroyed, 5th Panzer were down to less than 20 tanks and were ordered to withdraw.

Minsk was now defended by less than 1,800 troops and

35,000 support staff. On 3 July, columns of T-34s with tank riders for protection were sent into the city. By 9 July, the city had fallen and the destruction of Army Group Centre was complete.

Massive numbers of German units trapped east of the city attempted to flee westward across the Berezina, disintegrating as they went.

Whilst some troops in the northern sectors of the Army Group were able to escape to Army Group North, the majority of its formations were destroyed. Of over 30 original divisions, 17 had been totally destroyed and the rest reduced to pale shadows of their former strengths. Total troop losses were over 300,000, of which half were on their way to Soviet POW camps. Bagration and the destruction of Army Group Centre was the single greatest defeat the German army endured in World War II. In less than two weeks, more troops had been lost than in the entire Stalingrad battle. Soviet losses were also heavy, being in the region of 200,000, but these were numbers that the massive Red Army fighting machine could absorb.



TOP SECRET

ROSA SHANINA

In September 1944, her unit entered East Prussia where in early encounters with the enemy she eliminated five Germans in one day taking her total count to 51. In December, whilst stalking a German officer, she was hit by an enemy sniper in the shoulder. Incredibly she was only out of action for a week before she harangued Red Army medics to discharge her back to the frontline. Although Shanina was modest about her abilities, she became known for her ability to 'score a doublet', where two enemy were sniped in quick succession. Like many Red Army snipers she became a useful propaganda tool for the Soviet authorities but she refused to be removed from the frontline for her own safety. In early 1945, she nearly lost her life to friendly Katyusha rocket fire and quickly

learned to appreciate the German's fear of 'Stalin's Organs'. After reaching 59 kills, Rosa's luck finally ran out. Whilst working with a reconnaissance team, she went to the aid of a wounded Red Army officer. For a couple of hours she held off a number of determined German attempts to capture him. Finally her position came under direct German artillery fire and she was seriously wounded by shrapnel. Although she was rescued by friendly troops, she died from her wounds in the field hospital. After the war interest in Rosa grew with the publication of her diaries, which modestly told the tale of an ordinary Russian woman whose bravery and skills made her a real heroine of the Soviet Union.

Cost	75pts (Veteran)
Composition	2 – sniper and assistant
Weapons	1 Rifle
Special Rules	- Team weapon - Sniper - Score a doublet: Shanina's ability to take multiple rapid shots allows her to fire two shots (against the same unit!) using the sniper rule if given a Fire order, including from Ambush. - Stubborn

FIGHTING BAGRATION WITH *BOLT ACTION*

Whilst a disaster for Germany, Bagration is rife with stories of heroism and determination on both sides and provides ample opportunities for Bolt Action players to fight many interesting battles in a wide variety of situations. In most cases, the Germans will be on the defensive and usually heavily outnumbered. The modifications noted for 'An Unequal Struggle' (see page 14) can be used for scenarios in this period. Additionally, whilst German players might usually prefer to deploy Regular or Veteran units, there is a certain fascination and reward in playing out these scenarios with the types of inexperienced forces that historically represented a growing proportion of the German Army's make-up. For Soviet players, the boot is finally on the other foot as hardened Red Army troops have the chance to battle the rag-tag remnants of the German armed forces desperately defending their shrinking conquered territories.

TERRAIN

The battles of Bagration fought over the western parts of Byelorussia close to the extensive Pripyat Marshes featured large tracts of wet and marshy ground criss-crossed by small streams and rivers. Bridges were therefore vital objectives and engineering/pioneer troops were heavily used by both sides. Thick forests were also a dominant

feature of the terrain and provided fine cover for escaping troops or partisans planning an ambush.

SCENARIOS

GENERAL SCENARIOS

All of the scenarios in the *Bolt Action* rulebook are suitable for Operation Bagration but the following Attacker–Defender scenarios are particularly applicable:

- **Scenario 7: Envelopment:** Unable to retreat due to the Führer's orders. This represents the typical situation the Wehrmacht found itself in during Bagration.
- **Scenario 8: Manhunt:** In the early stages of Bagration, Soviet scout units would conduct prisoner capture missions to learn more about the German defences before the main offensive commenced.
- **Scenario 9: Point Defence:** This works well for Soviet assaults on German units desperately holding onto a bridge or road junction vital for retreating friendly forces.
- **Scenario 10: Surrounded:** 'We are surrounded, there is no escape.' An isolated German force decides to sell itself dearly rather than fall into the hands of the Soviets and an extended stay in a Siberian Gulag.

A BM-13 Katyusha rocket truck takes position



SPECIAL RULES FOR BAGRATION SCENARIOS

The following special rules can be incorporated into scenarios set during Operation Bagration to give them a unique feel. They are optional and both players should agree to their use.

Reserves

Army Group Centre's forces were spread thinly across a long defensive line. Little if any manpower remained for reserves. The German player should not use the reserves special rule when it is not mandatory.

Preparatory bombardment

The volume of firepower and effectiveness of Soviet artillery in Bagration was devastating. The Soviet player may always add +1 to their die roll for preparatory bombardments.

Air support

The Red Army Air Force maintained almost absolute air superiority over the Bagration battlefields, subjecting German forces to the regular attentions of IL-2 Sturmovik and PE-2 attack aircraft. The German player should not include forward air observers, whilst the Soviet player can add +1 to their die roll when determining the type of air attack on the warplane type chart (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook).

Bunkers and buildings

The Germans had very few concrete fortifications defending their territory in Bagration, the majority being of earth and wood construction. If a scenario calls for the use of bunkers these should only provide a cover modifier of -3. The bunker will also collapse if it suffers 10 or more from an HE shell. Buildings in this part of Byelorussia were primarily of wooden construction. Brick and concrete buildings should only be used in scenarios set in urban areas such as Minsk.

Minefields

The frontline German defences were protected by extensive minefields, so for Attacker–Defender scenarios the German player may place minefield sections (see page 141).

The Soviet player may also add the following specialist tank to their force selections:

Soviet PT-34 mine-roller vehicle options

Soviet T-34s may be fitted with a 'Protivominniy Tral' (counter-mine trawl).

During Operation Bagration, fighting on the Moscow–

Minsk highway saw the deployment of whole battalions of PT-34s and PT-34/85s to break through the thick defensive mine belts.

Any T-34 or T-34-85 can be modified to a PT-34 for +10pts. This option gives the T-34 the following special rules:

- **Mine clearance:**

When you give this unit an Advance order and it moves into a minefield section that section is cleared automatically, but it destroys the mine roller.

- **Slow:**

A PT-34 has the slow special rule until the mine roller is destroyed or voluntarily jettisoned before the tank moves.

BAGRATION SPECIAL SCENARIOS

The following three scenarios are designed to reflect incidents during defence of the Berezina River crossings where more capable German forces were deployed to stop the Soviet onslaught:

Scenario 1: The Tigers of Krupki

Scenario 2: The Battle of Pleshchenitsy

Scenario 3: The '34'

AN UNEQUAL STRUGGLE

At the start of the Barbarossa campaign, the Axis forces were able to counter Soviet numerical superiority through superior manoeuvre tactics or simply relying on the better quality of German troops and their equipment.

However, by mid-1944 the Red Army had achieved qualitative parity in both men and equipment. This allowed the Soviet Union to deliver its enormous

TOP SECRET

THE RED GOD OF WAR

Perhaps the most terrifying experience any German soldier on the Eastern Front could suffer was to be on the receiving end of one of the enormous artillery barrages that generally preceded a Red Army attack. Such was the intensity of these bombardments that advancing Soviet troops often found no enemy left alive in the forward trenches and those that still lived helpless, suffering from severe shock and concussion. Soviet commanders took to calling the artillery formations 'The God of War' – a vital element of the late war Red Army combined operations strategy. In addition to incapacitating the enemy, the barrages pulverised trench works, cut telephone lines and destroyed forward ammunition dumps. On occasion, the amount of smoke and debris thrown up by the bombardments actually prevented follow-up Soviet air strikes as pilots could simply not see their targets. For the Germans, the only way to minimise the effect was to withdraw to secondary defensive trench lines before the attack commenced, which in itself greatly impacted their ability to mount an effective defence.



manpower advantages exactly where it wanted to. From Kursk onwards the Germans would be facing overwhelming odds wherever they faced the Red Army. This situation became even more skewed by 1945 as the quality of German troops deteriorated as they simply ran out of experienced soldiers, the majority of whom had perished in the vast wastes of the Soviet Union or languished in the Siberian POW camps.

From a gaming perspective, replicating these asymmetrical battles might not seem a particularly great experience for the German player. However, it is possible to balance such games with a number of fixes and ideas. One of the fun aspects of wargaming is to recreate history. Any true representation of Eastern Front warfare should reflect these numerical differences, and we would encourage you to experiment with the following ideas. You will find that several of the campaigns in this book recommend using this option.

Of course, this is all completely optional and both players must agree on its use. It is also not recommended for competition gaming.

SUGGESTED POINTS VALUES FOR 'UNEQUAL STRUGGLE' GAMES

For Attacker–Defender scenarios, we recommend giving the Soviet player three times as many points to select their forces as the German player. So, for example, if the German player chooses a force of 500 points then the Soviet player may choose 1,500 points. For Battle scenarios, a ratio of one to two seems appropriate. For example, if the German player chooses 500 points, the Soviet player may take 1,000 points.

INCREASE VICTORY POINTS

- The outnumbered player earns double victory points in a Battle scenario and triple points in an Attacker–Defender scenario.

REDUCED VISIBILITY

- Reduced visibility can often greatly help an outnumbered defender, so many asymmetrical scenarios can be balanced by using the night fighting rules (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook).

SUPPLY ISSUES

- Roll a die every time an infantry or vehicle unit on the outnumbering side fires.
- If a 1 is rolled after firing, the unit has run out of ammunition and cannot fire unless resupplied.
- Roll a die every time a vehicle unit on the outnumbering side moves.
- If a 1 is rolled, the vehicle has run out of fuel and may not move again until it is resupplied.

Out of fuel or ammunition status can be shown by a die or counter placed next to the affected vehicle/unit.

RESUPPLY

A vehicle or Infantry unit can lose its out of ammunition status or out of fuel status by being given a Down order. This will automatically remove any out of ammunition or out of fuel status markers from the unit/vehicle. This simulates either infantry scavenging spare ammunition or vehicles being resupplied by some very brave support troops.

Alternatively, to be even tougher on the more numerous force, you can make out of ammunition and out of fuel effects permanent.

BAGRATION THEATRE SELECTORS

AXIS:

- 1944 – Defence of the East *Armies of Germany*
- Forlorn Hope This book page [16](#)
- 1943–44: A Red Storm Rising (Hungary) *Armies of Italy and the Axis*
- Schwere Panzerabteilungen This book page [19](#)
- 5th Panzer Division This book page [20](#)

SOVIET:

- Operation Bagration *Armies of the Soviet Union*
- 3rd Guards Tank Corps This book page [18](#)

THE FORLORN HOPE THEATRE SELECTOR

After all the hopes of resurgence on the Eastern Front had been crushed by the defeat at Kursk, a sense of fatalism grew amongst the members of the German armed forces. Operation Zitadelle smashed once and for all any lingering beliefs that the Red Army was a poorly led and clumsy opponent. It was now clear that Stalingrad was not an isolated setback. The tide had truly changed and the Axis could now look forward to only a grinding defensive battle that it was ill-equipped to handle. Whilst Germany was still capable of putting enormous numbers of soldiers in the field, the overall quality of individual troops was beginning to deteriorate. Many of the excellent junior leaders who had

made Germany's earlier triumphs possible were now dead or prisoners of the Soviet Union. Führer directives that specifically ordered against any retreat now hobbled the aggressive and innovative generals who had masterminded the earlier vast encirclements and deep thrusts into the Soviet heartland. Failure to comply resulted in relief of command or worse. Without the freedom to manoeuvre, hundreds of thousands of the cream of the Wehrmacht were captured or killed as the Red Army put into practice every lesson they had painfully learned between 1941 and 1943. The Germans' apparent lead in military engineering and technology also played against them as resources were wasted on developing new tanks and aircraft at the expense of increasing production of the vehicles that were currently in the field and desperately needed in numbers to offset the Soviet numerical advantage. Soviet tanks and aircraft may have been less refined but they were effective and available in numbers that the Germans could not hope to match.

Perhaps the greatest German problem was the sheer length of the Eastern Front. Forced into a defensive stance, its manpower now needed to be spread along thousands of miles of territory as Soviet breakthroughs could happen anytime, anywhere. German frontline formations simply did not have the troop numbers to do this, so compromises needed to be made. Germany's allies – Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria – could take some of the strain, but few

Heer anti-tank gunners choose their target



soldiers of these countries had any enthusiasm for a grim defensive struggle against a vengeful Red Army and their performance in the field reflected this. Germany did have another pool of manpower to draw upon, but it was hardly ideal. The Nazi philosophy of judging the inhabitants of the conquered areas of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as inferior had resulted in the need for enormous numbers of security troops to keep a hostile and in some cases resisting population under control. Whilst many of these men were nominally registered as being members of the Wehrmacht or the Waffen-SS, they were in no way trained or even equipped to serve on the frontline, instead being mostly used to cow civilian populations. However, with the huge losses experienced by Germany in 1943, more and more of these forces were being put into the frontline to face the Red Army. Whilst some formations were stiffened with cadres of experienced grenadiers, many were completely unprepared for the rigours of combat with the Red Army and simply collapsed.

The following Theatre Selector is an optional choice for German players who want to field a more historically accurate illustration of the German Army that fought the terrible battles of Operation Bagration, Lvov–Sandomierz and the Vistula–Oder offensive. Whilst it is satisfying to play 1944–45 games with veteran panzer grenadiers and elite Waffen-SS units, there is a certain fascination in putting yourself in the combat boots of a German commander who knows that the forces at his disposal are less than perfect or reliable.

The Forlorn Hope Theatre Selector is not recommended for tournament-style games.

FORLORN HOPE REINFORCED PLATOON

A German force for the 'Forlorn Hope' must comprise one or more reinforced platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each reinforced platoon is made up as follows:

- 1 Lieutenant (First or Second)
- 2 Infantry squads: Heer Grenadier squads, Waffen-SS squads (late war)

Plus:

Headquarters

- 0–1 Captain or Major
- 0–1 Medic team
- 0–1 Forward observer (artillery or air)

Infantry

- 0–4 Infantry squads: Sicherungs Battalion squads, Feldgendarmarie squad, Osttruppen squads, Strafbattalion

Penal squads, Luftwaffe Field Divisions squads. A maximum of one squad selected from Heer Veteran Grenadier squad, Feldjägerkorps squad, Sturmpanzere squad.

- 0–2 MMG teams
- 0–1 Mortar team: Light, medium or heavy
- 0–1 Panzerschreck team
- 0–1 Sniper team
- 0–1 Flamethrower team
- 0–1 Goliath team

Artillery

- 0–1 gun from:
 - Anti-tank gun: PaK 36, Panzerbuchse 41, PaK 38, PaK 40
 - Artillery gun: Light, medium or heavy
 - Anti-aircraft gun: Flak 38, Flakvierling 38, Flak 36 or 88mm AA/AT Flak36

Armoured car

- 0–1 Armoured car or Recce vehicle: motorcycle with machine-gun sidecar, SdKfz 222, SdKfz 231 (8-Rad), SdKfz 234/1, SdKfz 234/2, SdKfz 234/3, SdKfz 250/9, SdKfz 250/10 or SdKfz 250/11

Tanks, Tank destroyers, Assault guns, Self-propelled artillery and Anti-aircraft vehicles:

- 0–1 vehicle from: Panzer II Ausf L, Flammpanzer B2 (f), Flammpanzer III, Panzer IV Ausf G or H, StuG III Ausf F, G or H, StuG IV, StuH42, Marder I, Marder II, Marder III Ausf H or M, RSO/PaK 40, Panther Ausf D, A or G, Tiger I, Grille, Wespe, Hummel, SdKfz 251/2, SdKfz 250/7, Jagdpanzer IV, Nashorn, Panzerwerfer 42, SdKfz 251/9 Stummel, SdKfz 251/16, SdKfz 250/8 Stummel, SdKfz 251 Stuka zu Fuss, Opel Blitz with Flak 38, SdKfz 10/4 with Flak 38, SdKfz 7/1 or 7/2, SdKfz 7/2 armoured cab, SdKfz 251/17

Transport and Tows

- 0–1 Transport vehicle per infantry unit in the reinforced platoon from: SdKfz 10, SdKfz 7, Truck, Maultier, Kubelwagen, Schwimmwagen, SdKfz 251/1, SdKfz 250/1, Heavy field car, a maximum of one SdKfz 251/10
- 0–1 Tow from: SdKfz 10, SdKfz 7, Truck, Maultier, SdKfz 4, Raupenschlepper Ost, Kettenkrad, Heavy field car, Horse-drawn limber

No Veterans:

In a 'Forlorn Hope' theatre selection, to reflect the general inexperience of German specialist teams, no Veteran selections may be taken for infantry teams, gun units or transport and tow options. The Panzer Divisions, however, did not suffer a fall in quality to the same extent as the infantry, so armoured cars, tanks, tank destroyers, self-propelled guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft vehicles may be taken as Veteran units.

3RD GUARDS TANK CORPS THEATRE SELECTOR

A Soviet force for the 3rd Guards Tank Corps must comprise one or more reinforced armoured platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each armoured platoon is made up as follows:

1 command vehicle: M4A2 75mm* or Valentine IX (-10pts if lack of radios rule from Tank War is chosen)

2 M4A2 75mm* or Valentine IX

Plus:

0-2 vehicles from: M10 Wolverine, Sherman M4A2 75mm*, Valentine IX, M3 Scout car, M17 AA Half-track

0-4 Infantry squads, LMG Infantry squad (max one LMG per squad), SMG squads, Guards squads (max one LMG per squad) Veteran squads (max one LMG per squad), Tank Riders squads

0-1 Captain or Major

0-1 Lieutenant (First or Second)

0-1 Medic

0-2 Forward observer (artillery or air)

0-1 MMG team

0-1 HMG team

0-1 Mortar team: Light or medium

0-1 Sniper team

0-1 Flamethrower team

0-1 Anti-tank team: Anti-tank rifle team, Tank hunter anti-tank team (remember three-for-one rule in Armies of Soviet Union book, page 58)

0-2 guns from:

Anti-tank gun: 45mm Model 37, M-42 anti-tank gun, ZiS-2 anti-tank gun, ZiS-3 divisional gun, A-19 Field gun, BS-3 anti-tank gun

Artillery gun: Light or medium

Anti-aircraft gun: 37mm 61-K 1939

Transports and Tows from: Truck, M5 Half-track, Universal Carrier or jeep

The armoured platoon must include enough transport vehicles and/or tows (either soft-skin or armoured) to transport all models in the infantry and artillery units, up to a maximum of one transport vehicle per unit of infantry and/or artillery.

Notes: * By the time the 3rd GTC was fighting in the Vistula-Oder offensive and Operation Berlin, many M4A2 75mm had been replaced by M4A2 76mm.

53RD GUARDS TANK BRIGADE THEATRE SELECTOR

A Soviet force for the 53rd Guards Tank Brigade must comprise one or more reinforced armoured platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each armoured platoon is made up as follows:

1 command vehicle: T-34/85 (-10pts if the lack of radios rule from Tank War is chosen)

2 T-34/85

0-2 vehicles from: T-60, T-70, T-34/76, OT-34/76, T-34/85, OT-34/85, Su-85, ISU-122, SU-76, SU-122, Tokarev 4M Quad Maxim, BA-64, BA-64B, BA-64 DShK



Tiger II (Porsche turret)



0–4 Infantry squads, LMG Infantry squad (max one LMG per squad), SMG squads, Guards squads (max one LMG per squad) Veteran squads (max one LMG per squad), Tank Riders squads

0–1 Captain or Major
0–1 Lieutenant (First or Second)
0–1 Medic
0–2 Forward observer (artillery or air)

0–1 MMG team
0–1 HMG team
0–1 Mortar team: Light or medium
0–1 Sniper team
0–1 Flamethrower team
0–1 Anti-tank team: Anti-tank rifle team, Tank hunter anti-tank team, (remember the three-for-one rule in Armies of Soviet Union book, page 58)

0–2 guns from:
Anti-tank gun: 45mm Model 37, M-42 anti-tank gun, ZiS-2 anti-tank gun, ZiS-3 divisional gun, A-19 Field gun, BS-3 anti-tank gun.

Artillery gun: Light or medium
Anti-aircraft gun: 37mm 61-K 1939

Transports and Tows from: Truck, Half-track truck, Komsomolets artillery tractor, Gaz jeep

The armoured platoon must include enough transport vehicles and/or tows (either soft-skin or armoured) to transport all models in the infantry and artillery units, up to a maximum of one transport vehicle per unit of infantry and/or artillery.

GERMAN HEAVY TANK ABTEILUNG THEATRE SELECTOR

Rather than being distributed piecemeal to German tank formations, Tiger tanks were often gathered together in elite tank units of battalion size (Schwere Panzerabteilungen).

Originally fielded as heavy breakthrough units, the Tigers spearheaded armoured thrusts through defended terrain. On the Eastern Front, this culminated in the battle of Kursk. However, as the Germans went more onto the defensive they became ‘fire brigade’ units to counter enemy armoured breakthroughs. Early Schwere Panzerabteilungen formations contained a mix of medium PzKpFw III/IV tanks and Tigers with the medium tanks performing reconnaissance. As the war progressed, the medium tanks disappeared and the Tigers became the sole AFVs in the formation. Nominally, a typical heavy Abteilung would have a total strength of 45 heavy tanks. Three Tigers would be assigned to the Abteilung staff, two Tigers for each company’s HQ and three platoons/Zug of four Tigers in each company.

Of course, the on-paper strength of 45 Tigers was fairly rare in German formations in 1944 and 1945, as losses were not always replaced. Each Abteilung would also have its own additional supply units, flak, signals and combat engineer companies. As befits their fire-fighting role, these units would not be fixed permanently to larger formations but would rather be attached to other formations when needed, creating temporary Kampfgruppe.

Schwere Panzerabteilungen 505's first operations were in the Orel region in April 1943, and it then took part in the titanic struggle at Kursk as part of Operation Zitadelle. After refitting and replacing its losses it fought on in the Orel, Dnieper and North Ukraine sectors. It reformed with the Tiger II September 1944 and fought on the Vistula, in East Prussia, Königsberg and Samland. Its final engagement was at Pillau, where it was finally disbanded after severe losses.

The 505th boasted a number of Tiger aces including Wilhelm Knauth, credited with 68 kills, who won the Knights Cross and Oberleutnant Mausberg with 50 or more kills to his name.

A German force for a Heavy Tank Abteilung must comprise one or more reinforced armoured platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each armoured platoon is made up as follows:

1 command vehicle: Tiger I or Tiger II

0-3 Tiger I or Tiger II

Plus:

0-2 Panzer Grenadier squads

0-1 Captain or Major

0-1 Lieutenant (First or Second)

0-1 Medic

0-1 Forward observer (artillery or air)

0-1 Pioneer squad

0-1 HMG team

0-1 Mortar team: Light or medium

0-1 Self-propelled gun from: Hummel, Nashorn, Wirbelwind

Transports from: Truck, SdKfz 251

The armoured platoon must include enough transport vehicles and/or tows (either soft-skin or armoured) to transport all models in the infantry and artillery units, up to a maximum of one transport vehicle per unit of infantry and/or artillery.

5TH PANZER DIVISION THEATRE SELECTOR

Amongst the seeming catalogue of unmitigated military disasters that befell the German army during 1944 and 1945, there were a few fighting formations that acquitted themselves with a level of professionalism and élan.

One of these was the 5th Panzer Division, held in such high regard by the Soviet high command that it had advised its field commanders to avoid directly engaging it if at all possible.

The 5th Panzer Division was one of the second group of divisions formed in 1938 and had made its name during the invasions of France and Belgium. Indeed, had it not been ordered by Hitler to stop its advance in May 1940, it would probably have destroyed the remnants of the BEF on the beaches at Dunkirk.

A Jagdpanther searches for its next victim



During 1941, it fought in the Yugoslavian and Greek campaigns before being deployed north to take part in Operation Barbarossa. 5th Panzer was one of the spearhead formations in the march on Moscow and came within 34 kilometres of the city's outskirts in December 1941 before being pushed back by the Soviet winter offensive. The division remained in a largely defensive mode with Army Group Centre and avoided being pulled into the meat grinder of the push to the Volga where so many German formations were mauled or destroyed. The 5th also avoided the attack against the Kursk salient, but was instrumental in the following defensive battles where it skilfully helped stabilise various sectors of the front.

The continued high command obsession on a possible Soviet attack in the North Ukraine caused the 5th to be temporarily moved out of Army Group Centre before Bagration commenced. Only once the collapse of its former army group became a distinct possibility was the 5th Panzer transferred back into the savage battle. During its valiant defence of Minsk, it lost the majority of its vehicles and was forced to withdraw. After Bagration it re-equipped but had only a shadow of its former strength and took part in the general German retreat through East Prussia and along the Baltic coast. In April 1945, it was finally surrounded in the Samland peninsula but some elements were lucky enough to be evacuated by the Kriegsmarine and surrendered to the Western Allies in May.

PLAYING BOLT ACTION WITH THE 5TH PANZER DIVISION

When it was committed to the defence of Minsk, the 5th Panzer was somewhat untypical, having been brought up to strength with the latest equipment available. It had also managed to avoid significant losses due to its experienced commanders and junior officers. Other German formations, which had few veteran personnel left, were proving themselves incapable of handling the gritty and effective tactics of the Red Army.

Tanks

The 13th Panzer Regiment at full strength had over 120 tanks, a mix of late model Panzer IV and Panther medium tanks.

Infantry

The 5th had two Panzergrenadier regiments (13th and 31st), which were well equipped with SdKfz 251 half-tracks. There would be a good mix of Heer Grenadier squads and Veteran Heer Grenadier squads.

Field artillery

The 5th's artillery regiment had just been re-equipped with Hummel self-propelled guns.

Tank destroyers

For the defence of Minsk, the 5th had an attached company primarily comprised of Nashorn tank destroyers.

Reconnaissance

In addition to a usual complement of various SdKfz 234 type armoured cars, the 5th Recon Battalion also apparently fielded a number of the new Panzer III 'Luchs'.

Engineers

The 89th Panzer Pioneers were both adept in their primary role and in combat. Whilst setting charges on the bridges over the Berezina, the pioneers were forced to defend themselves against advancing Soviet reconnaissance forces until they were relieved by other 5th Panzer forces. They were a highly mobile unit and had a full complement of SdKfz 251 half-tracks. A German force for the 5th Panzer Division must comprise one or more reinforced armoured platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each armoured platoon is made up as follows:

1 command vehicle: Panther Ausf A/D/G or Panzer IV Ausf G/H

2 Panther Ausf A/D/G or Panzer IV Ausf G/H

0-2 vehicles from: Panther Ausf A/D/G, Panzer IV Ausf G/H, Panzer II Ausf L, SdKfz 234/1, SdKfz 234/3, SdKfz 234/4

0-3 Panzer Grenadier squads

0-1 Captain or Major

0-1 Lieutenant (First or Second)

0-1 Medic

0-1 Forward observer (artillery or air)

0-1 Heer Pioneer squad

0-1 MMG team

0-1 Mortar team: Light or medium

0-1 Self-propelled gun from Hummel, Nashorn, Wirbelwind

Transports and Tows from: Truck, SdKfz 251, Maultier, Kubelwagen

The armoured platoon must include enough transport vehicles and/or tows (either soft-skin or armoured) to transport all models in the infantry and artillery units, up to a maximum of one transport vehicle per unit of infantry and/or artillery.

ADDITIONAL GERMAN UNITS

SICHERUNGS (SECURITY) BATTALION SQUAD

The Sicherungs Wehrmacht Security divisions were initially recruited in 1941 and were tasked with policing and other security duties in German-occupied territory. The Sicherungs would advance behind the frontline combat formations, handling prisoners of war and ensuring that the local population was sufficiently enthusiastic about their new masters. With the rapid German advances into the Balkans and the Soviet Union, these units became heavily involved in anti-partisan activity.

The Sicherungs divisions were mainly made up from troops both from inside and outside of Germany who were deemed unfit for frontline combat either through bad health or age. Some Sicherungs divisions had a small armoured detachment but they, like the rest of the division's equipment, were generally obsolete or of foreign origin and obsolete. Sicherungs units fell to the lowest levels of the supply chain. Most of the better units were thrown into the meat grinder that was Operation Bagration and were effectively destroyed.

Cost	35pts (Inexperienced infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	-Add up to 5 additional men with rifles for +7pts each -The NCO can have a submachine gun instead of a rifle for +3pt -Up to 1 man can have a light machine gun for +20pts – another man becomes the loader -Up to 1 man can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts
Special Rules	-Green: Sicherungs units were of varying quality but the occasional unit shone when thrust into battle

FELDGENDARMERIE SQUAD

These were the German military police and from 1943 onwards they were given the prime task of maintaining order amongst regular Wehrmacht troops at a time when the changing fortunes of war were seeing increased numbers of desertions and dereliction of duty. Instantly recognizable by the ceremonial metal gorget piece that hung around their neck, they gained the nickname 'Kettenhunde' (chained dogs).

One of their most unpleasant activities was to filter refugee columns and search hospitals for alleged deserters or 'those lacking morale fibre'. At best, those unfortunates

picked up would be sent back to the front as part of a Strafbattalion penal unit or at worse face a firing squad or the hangman's noose. However, like all German second line formations, by late 1944 they found themselves on the frontline facing the Red Army.



Cost	50pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles for +10pts each - The NCO and up to 4 men can have submachine guns instead of rifles for +3pts each - Up to 2 men can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts each - The entire squad can be mounted on motorcycles for +5pts. Each LMG is assumed to be mounted on a motorbike and sidecar.
Special Rules	- Chained dogs: Any Strafbattalion penal squad or Replacement army squads starting a turn within 6" of a Feldgendarmerie or Feldjägerkorps squad will lose the shirkers special rule for that turn only.

FELDJÄGERKORPS SQUAD

These troops were the veteran wing of the standard Feldgendarmerie and were recruited from soldiers that had served at least three full years in a frontline formation and had earned at least the Iron Cross Second Class. Such was the authority of the Feldjägerkorps that any member of

the organisation could question or interrogate a regular army officer of any rank. They were also much better equipped than their Feldgendarmerie colleagues. These troops were the closest German equivalent to the Soviet NKVD commissars.

Cost	70pts (Veteran Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles for +14pts each - The NCO and up to 4 men can have submachine guns instead of rifles for +3pts each - The NCO and up to 4 men can have assault rifles instead of rifles for +5pts each - Up to 2 men can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts each - The entire squad can be mounted on motorcycles for +5pts. Each LMG is assumed to be mounted on a motorbike and sidecar.
Special Rules	- Chained dogs: Any Strafbattalion penal squad or Replacement army squads starting a turn within 6" of a Feldgendarmerie or Feldjägerkorps squad will lose the shirkers special rule for that turn only.

STRAFBATTALION PENAL SQUAD

The Strafbattalion have their origins in pre-war Germany as military formations for men who were known to have problems with military discipline. Through a programme of punishment and heavy discipline it was believed that the worst criminal could conform to the military life and eventually serve a useful role in the regular Heer. After the outbreak of war, the Strafbattalion recruits were generally serving soldiers who had broken military code and rules. They were encouraged that if they performed heroically in the battalion, they could expect a reprieve and be transferred back to regular forces. Unfortunately, this

meant that most Strafbattalion were committed to dangerous operations or activities, in many cases being used as 'cannon fodder'. As the war turned against the Germans, more Strafbattalion were created and the bottom of the barrel was scraped for recruits, many of whom – being political prisoners – who had little or no military training or inclination to fight. Perhaps the most famous of the Strafbattalion was Bewährungsbataillon 500, which boasted a high proportion of enlisted men looking for pardon and remained an effective unit.

Cost	20pts (Inexperienced Infantry) or 35pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles for +4 pts each (Inexperienced) or +7pts each (Regular) - The NCO and up to 2 men can have submachine guns instead of rifles for +3pts each - The NCO and up to 2 men can have assault rifles instead of rifles for +5pts each - Up to 1 man can have a light machine gun for +20pts – another man becomes the loader - Up to 1 man can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts - The squad can be given anti-tank grenades for +2pts per man
Special Rules	- Shirkers - Tank hunters if anti-tank grenades taken



Red Army soldiers hitch a ride towards Krupki on their lend lease Shermans.



BEGLEIT: STUG ESCORT INFANTRY SQUAD

The StuG assault guns were often called upon to fight as tank destroyers. Following the Soviet example of using tank riders, certain 'Sturm' companies embarked Begleit/

bodyguard infantry to ride on the vehicle's rear deck. The Begleit would provide anti-infantry protection, suppressing enemy tank hunter teams.

Cost	50pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles at +10pts each - The NCO and up to 6 men can have submachine guns instead of rifles for +3pts each - Up to 1 man can have a light machine gun for +20pts – another man becomes the loader
Special Rules	-Assault gun riders: An assault gun rider unit can mount or dismount from an assault gun or tank destroyer counting it as a transport. Only one unit of assault gun riders can ride upon one assault gun or tank destroyer. As with other transported units, they cannot be targeted whilst they ride upon their vehicle; however, unlike other troops, assault gun riders must immediately disembark if the assault gun is shot at by any kind of weapon. The assault gun riders disembark when the shot is declared and the firer is determined to be in range, but before rolling the dice to determine hits. Units disembarking through fire immediately go Down or remain Down if they are Down already.

SCENARIO 1: THE TIGERS OF KRUPKI

DESCRIPTION

On 26 June 1944, the 505th Schwere Panzerabteilungen was attached to the 5th Panzer Division outside Minsk. It was to be used as a blocking force to halt advancing Soviet armour that was heading northeast of Borisov towards the Berezina River. The Red Army hoped to reach the river and its bridges and cut off and destroy the shattered 4th Army, which was falling back westwards. The 505th would once again be called upon to be the fire brigade and stop the Red Army in its tracks. The town of Krupki was selected as the best place to hold and the 505th hastily deployed 29 of their Tiger Is ready for action. It was not long before the advancing Sherman tanks of the 3rd Guards Tank Corps arrived on the scene and a vicious tank battle was joined.

INFANTRY TANK MK III VALENTINE IX

Cost	136pts (Inexperienced), 170pts (Regular), 204pts (Veteran)
Weapons	1 turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun
Damage Value	9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules	- Slow

M4A2 SHERMAN 75MM

Cost	156pts (Inexperienced), 195pts (Regular), 244pts (Veteran)
Weapons	1 turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with co-axial MMG and forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value	9+ (medium tank)
Options	- May add a pintle-mounted MMG on the turret for +15pts - May upgrade the pintle-mounted MMG to an HMG for +10pts
Special Rules	- Easily catches fire: If a roll on the vehicle damage table results in the vehicle catching fire add D3 pin markers rather than just one before the morale test. - HE: Instead of causing D2 HE hits, an HE shell causes D6 hits.

SET-UP

The Soviet player is the attacker. The German player picks a side of the table and sets up at least half of their units in their set-up area (see map). These units may use the hidden set-up rules (see page 131 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook). Units that are not set up to start with are left in reserve (see page 132 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook). The Soviet player's units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be their entire army if they wish. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve. Reserves are not allowed to outflank in this scenario.

OPPOSING FORCES

GERMAN ARMY

German armoured platoons should use the Schwere Panzerabteilungen Theatre Selector.

Alternatively, the 1944 – Defence of the East Theatre Selector in the *Armies of Germany* Book may be used.

SOVIET ARMY

The Soviet armoured platoons should be taken from the 3rd Guards Tank Corps Theatre Selector.

The main Soviet formation involved in this battle was the 3rd GTC. This formation was primarily equipped with lend-lease equipment. If you do not have the *Armies of the United States* or the *Armies of Great Britain* books, the M4A2 and Valentine IX statistics are given below.

The Battle at Krupki centred around that town's railway station so there should be a fair scattering of buildings and it would be visually appealing if a few lengths of railway track crossed the table.

OBJECTIVE

The Soviet player must try to move as many of their units as they can into the German player's set-up zone or off the Germans' table edge. The German player must try to stop him. Note that in this scenario, Soviet units are allowed to deliberately move off the table from the German table edge to reach their objective.

SCENARIO 1: THE TIGERS OF KRUPKI



Soviet troops use their lend lease vehicles to cover against land and air threats.





SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the Soviet player must move their entire first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the Soviet table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Preparatory bombardment

The Soviet player rolls a die: on a 2+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the German positions (see page 131 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook). On a result of 1, the barrage fails to materialise, but you have your orders and the attack must go ahead as planned.

Night fighting

Large parts of this battle were fought at night so it is recommended that this is fought as a night fight or flare scenario (see the night fighting rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook page 220).

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other then it has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and honours are shared – a draw!

The Soviet player scores one victory point for every German unit destroyed. They also score two victory points for each of their own units that is inside the Germans' set-up area (even if only partially), and three victory points for each of their own units that has moved off the German table edge before the end of the game.

The German player scores two victory points for every Soviet unit destroyed.

AFTERMATH

During the first Soviet attack on the night of 26 June, one company alone destroyed 16 Soviet tanks for no loss. The battle carried on into 27 June as the 3rd Guards Tank Corps committed more of its strength to try to take Krupki. Several further mass assaults by 60 to 70 Soviet tanks were made during which the 505th reportedly knocked out a further 51 tanks for the loss of six Tigers. Running low on ammunition and fuel, the German big cats were finally driven out of Krupki on the morning of 29 June.

SCENARIO 2: THE BATTLE OF PLESHCHENITSY

DESCRIPTION

Whilst the solid defence of the 505th Schwere Panzerabteilungen at Krupki had stalled the main Soviet advance, reconnaissance elements of the 3rd Guards Tank Corps had bypassed that battle and reached the bridges on the Berezina River. Here they made contact with the first arriving elements of the 5th Panzer Division. These were the 89th Panzer Pioneers who were preparing demolition charges to prevent the bridges falling to the Soviets. The Pioneers would have been overwhelmed but for the arrival of the 5th Panzer's reconnaissance battalion. A violent skirmish broke out between Soviet BA-64 armoured cars and German PzKpfw II 'Luchs' light tanks as the Red Army was kept away from the bridges. These lead elements, in addition to repelling a number of crossing attempts by the Red Army's 29th Tank Corps, also kept the highway open to allow the uninterrupted arrival and deployment of the division's panzer regiment with its 120 Panzer IV and Panther medium tanks.

By 1 July, the panzer regiment had arrived and been deployed for battle. It soon found itself in action to the north and northwest of Minsk, engaging both the Soviet 3rd Guards Tank Corps and the 29th Tank Corps in a major armoured battle near the town of Pleshchenitsy. These Wehrmacht forces, subsequently joined by the surviving Tigers of the 505th Schwere Panzerabteilungen, began to fight an impressive holding action as they struggled to leave a corridor open for the retreating 4th Army.

OPPOSING FORCES GERMAN ARMY

The German armoured platoons should be taken from the 5th Panzer Division Theatre Selector found on page 20 of this book. Alternatively, the 1944 – Defence of the East Theatre Selector in the *Armies of Germany* book may be used.

SOVIET ARMY

Soviet armoured platoons should be based on the Operation Bagration: The Destruction of Army Group Centre Theatre Selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book.

SET-UP

The Soviet Player is the attacker.

The table should be set up as shown in the Envelopment scenario map in the *Bolt Action* rulebook.

The German player picks a side of the table and sets up at least half of their units in their set-up area. These units may use the hidden set-up rules (see *Bolt Action* rulebook page 131). Units that are not set up to start with are left in reserve. The Soviet player's units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be their entire army if they wish. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve. Reserves are allowed to outflank in this scenario.

The terrain around Pleshchenitsy was fairly dense and typical of the ground upon which the battles of Operation



Lend Lease Soviet Sherman

Bagration were fought. Like much of this area of the Ukraine, the open ground is broken up with small dense wooded areas and shallow marshes. To represent this about 50% of the battlefield should be marked as 'rough ground' or 'dense woods'. It will also be appropriate to mark some small areas of the table as impassable terrain to indicate deeper bogs that will immobilise all vehicles.

As the majority of village or hamlet buildings were of wooden construction, any used in the game should only provide soft cover.

OBJECTIVE

The Soviet player must try to move as many of their units as they can into the German player's set-up zone or off the Germans' table edge. The German player must try and stop them. Note that in this scenario, Soviet units are allowed to deliberately move off the table from the German table edge to reach their objective.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the Soviet player must move their entire first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the Soviet table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no

order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Preparatory bombardment

The Soviet player rolls a die: on a 2+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the German positions. On a result of 1, the barrage fails to materialise, but you have your orders and the attack must go ahead as planned.

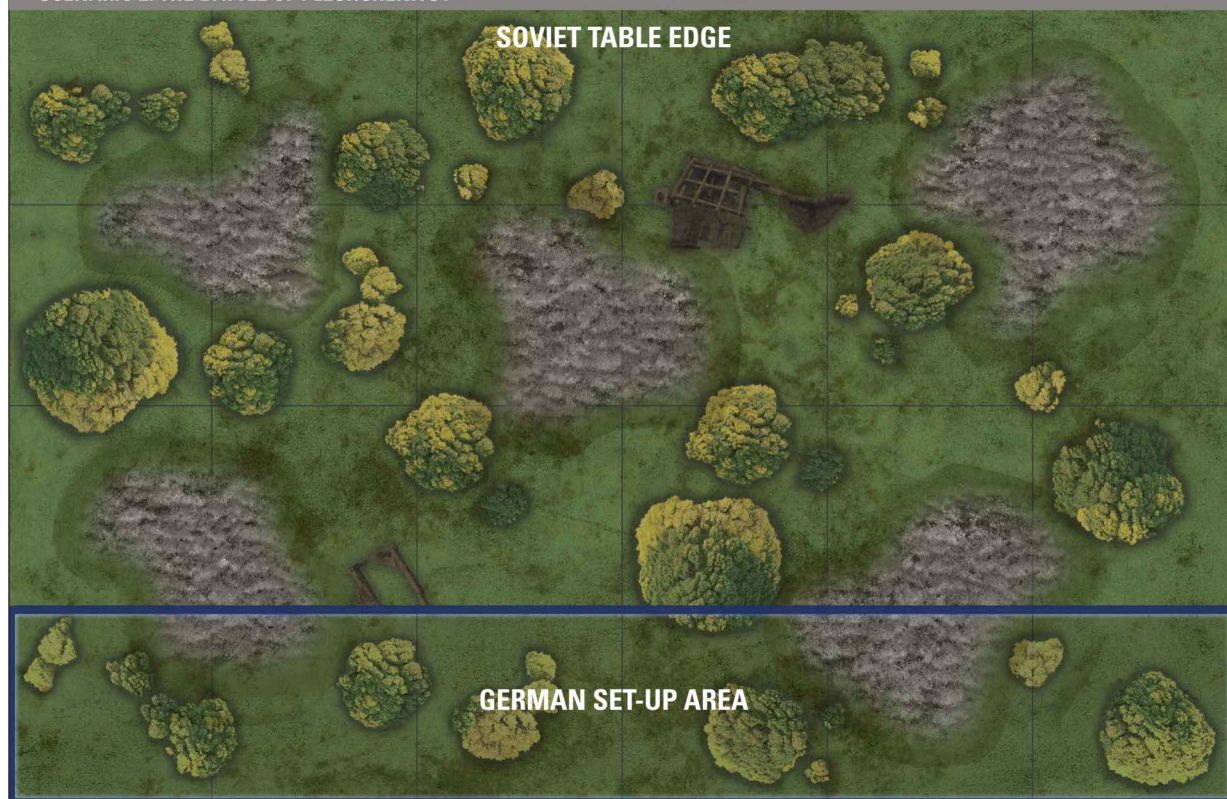
Air support

The Red Army Air Force maintained almost absolute air superiority over the Bagration battlefields. German forces were regularly preyed on by Soviet attack aircraft. The German player should not include forward air observers whilst the Soviet player can add +1 to their die roll when determining the type of air attack on the warplane type chart in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 86).

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

SCENARIO 2: THE BATTLE OF PLESHCHENITSY



VICTORY

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least two more victory points than the other then it has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and honours are shared – a draw!

The Soviet player scores one victory point for every German unit destroyed. They also score two victory points for each of their own units that is inside the Germans' set-up area (even if only partially), and three victory points for each of their own units that has moved off the German table edge before the end of the game.

The German player scores two victory points for every Soviet unit destroyed.

AFTERMATH

1 July saw the 5th Panzer Division starting to fight a series of well-executed holding actions against the 3rd Guards Tank Corps northwest of Minsk. This halted the headlong Soviet advance and bought valuable time for the evacuation of the wounded and second echelon non-combat troops westward along the few open railway tracks. By the end of a week's fighting, 5th Panzer and 505th Schwere Panzerabteilungen had destroyed over 295 Soviet armoured vehicles. However, the cost of achieving the mission of keeping the escape routes open cost the Germans dearly. The Soviet forces attacked with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of tanks and men, whilst the Sturmovik and PE-2 ground attack aircraft constantly harassed the German armour. By 8 July, the 505th had lost all of its Tigers and the 5th Panzer was reduced to just eight tanks from an initial total of over 120. Finally outflanked from the south, the remnants of the 5th Panzer retreated over the Berezina.

Despite holding the escape routes open for nearly a week, the sacrifice of the 5th Panzer was ultimately devalued by Hitler's refusal to allow the bulk of 4th Army to retreat across the Berezina until the last couple of days. This resulted in the loss of over 130,000 men.

The 3rd Guards Tank Corps catch the German defences unprepared.



SCENARIO 3: THE '34'

DESCRIPTION

One of the key crossing points of the River Berezina was at the town of Borisov, which was served by two sturdy bridges capable of supporting tanks and other heavy equipment. They became a priority target for the Red Army and the 3rd Guards Tank Corps was instructed to force the crossing and secure the bridges. The Germans had also realised their significance and Panzer Pioneers of the 5th Panzer Division were instructed to place demolition charges. Late on the night of 30 June, the Germans were unprepared for the speed of the Soviet advance and were taken by surprise when three T-34s of Tank Battalion 2 of the 3rd GTC came charging down the road directly towards the main bridge.

In the dark, the Pioneers may have mistaken these tanks for German vehicles retreating from the Red Army and they were not immediately challenged. Only when the speeding vehicles were already on the bridge were the distinctive silhouettes of the T-34s recognised as enemy and engaged. During the crossing, several small German defensive

positions were destroyed by main gun and machine gun fire before one tank finally succumbed to a Panzerfaust. To the further consternation of the defenders, a couple of platoons of Red Army infantry, heartened by the tank's progress, left their positions and swarmed across the bridge in pursuit. The local Pioneer commander, now fearing that this was a major assault, gave instructions to blow the bridge on his own authority. Accompanied by a shattering explosion, the bridge disintegrated and dropped into the river. Two Soviet tanks and a platoon of infantry now found themselves isolated, cut off and outnumbered by the shaken German defenders. Led by tank commander Lieutenant Pavel Rak, the Soviet forces quickly took stock and created a defensive perimeter. They also took possession of a number of machine guns and other heavy weapons taken from the German strongpoints that had been neutralised in the initial bridge crossing.

If stories are to be believed at no point did the isolated Red Army troops offer to surrender. For Rak's men it was simply a case of fight or die. However, there was still some hope. Although no reinforcements could reach them from across the river, they were aware that the 5th Guards Rifle Division was pushing into Borisov from several other directions. If they could only hold out for a few hours, then rescue was possible.

Although the German forces facing Rak were more numerous, they were not of high quality, being a mixture of tired grenadiers and second-line troops and security police units. Nevertheless, for these men here was a chance to crush some of the hated 'Ivans' to secure some payback for the humiliating retreats and casualties that the Red Army had just inflicted on them. Forces were hastily organised and orders were issued to begin an assault.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario pitches a dug-in Red Army reinforced platoon against a larger number of German attackers of questionable fighting quality. The Soviet player picks a force to an agreed points cost and the German player picks a force total of three times that amount (e.g., 1,500 points if the Russian player has 500 points).

GERMAN ARMY

The German player may select their forces from the Forlorn Hope Theatre Selector (see page 16).

SOVIET ARMY

Soviet forces should be selected from the Operation Bagration: Destruction of Army Group Centre Theatre



SCENARIO 3: THE '34'



Selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book.

To represent the historical theme of this scenario, the Soviet player should choose a T-34 medium tank as part of this force to represent the courageous Pavel Rak. It is not stated in the various accounts whether Rak commanded a T-34/76 or a T-34/85 so you may choose either. The Soviets should have no other vehicles and any anti-tank guns chosen should represent captured German PaK 40 75mm using the attributes found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook.

SET-UP

One 6" wide road should run from one short table edge to the other, roughly bisecting the table into two equal sections. This represents the main Moscow to Minsk highway. The rest of the table should be covered with a scattering of buildings, ruins or rubble scenery pieces to represent the outskirts of Borisov.

The Soviet player selects a side of the table and sets up all their forces in their set-up area. These units can start the game with dug-in status (see scenario special rules on page 139 of this book) and may also use hidden set-up (see page 131 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook). The Soviet player may also place three bunkers in their set-up area to represent the German strongpoints captured during the

initial bridge crossing. Up to one infantry unit may be placed in each bunker. Rules for bunkers can be found on page 127 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook.

As they set up their force, the Soviet player must place three separate objective markers in their set-up zone. All objectives must be at least 6" from the Soviet table edge and at least 18" from each other.

The German player's units are not set-up on the table at the start of the game. The player must designate up to half of their force (rounding up) to form the first assault wave. All other German units are left as reserve (see page 132 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook).

OBJECTIVE

The German player must try to capture all three objectives – 'The Ivans must be destroyed.'

The Soviet player must try and stop the Hitlerites – 'Red Army Comrades are on their way to relieve us!'

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

On Turn 1, the German player must move all the units they designated as the first assault wave onto the table. They can enter the table from any point on the Germans' table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. No order

test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

To the death

As Rak and his men expected to die, they would try to sell themselves dearly, so all Soviet troops are counted as fanatics in this scenario.



Dawn assault

As the counter-attack on the forces of Pavel Rak began in the early hours of 1 July, the scenario should be played using the rules for dawn assault (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook).

Preparatory bombardment

Not expecting the Soviet incursion, German artillery was ill prepared to support the assault. The German player rolls a die: on a 4+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the Soviet positions. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the barrage fails to materialise, but you have your orders and the attack must go ahead as planned.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

When the game ends, the winner will be the player controlling the most objectives. If both players hold an equal number of objectives, the game is a draw. To capture an objective there must be a model from one of your

infantry or artillery units (or a transport including one such unit) within 3" of the objective at the end of the turn, and there must be no enemy unit of any type within 3" of it. Once you capture an objective, you hold it until the enemy captures it back. All objectives begin the game under Soviet control.

AFTERMATH

Rak's forces actually held out for 16 hours before German forces finally overwhelmed them. During that time, they killed large numbers of attacking infantry and disabled a number of German armoured vehicles. There are even accounts that at least one of the T-34s counter-attacked the assaulting Germans and pushed deeper into Borisov, allegedly freeing 200 Russian prisoners who were on the verge of being executed. What seems certain is that the actions of Rak's tiny force spread panic amongst the German defenders and diverted troops that were needed to oppose the main Soviet assaults. Legend has it that Rak and his crew were the last of the defenders to die when their tank was hit by either tank or Panzerfaust fire. Rather than abandon their burning tank they continued to fight until the flames and smoke overwhelmed them. Relief forces from the 5th Guards Infantry reached the site of Rak's final battle a few hours' after he was killed.

ALTERNATIVES

Had the Germans not been able to blow the bridges, additional reinforcements may have reached Rak's men.

If you play this alternative, both sides should choose equal points values. However only 25% (rounding up) of the Soviet units may be deployed in the set-up area. The rest are considered reserves. The Soviet player should indicate a point on their table edge to represent the bridge and all reserves must enter at that point.



Opel Blitz with 2cm Flak

LVOV-SANDOMIERZ OFFENSIVE





With Army Group Centre smashed and streaming back into Western Poland, the long expected assault on the forces of Army Group North Ukraine began. Despite attempts to maintain the strength of the army group, many of its better units had been thrown into the meat grinder that was Bagration.

Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front had remained relatively passive whilst Bagration raged. Now STAVKA decreed it was the time for the 'million strong Front' to move. The biggest formation in the Red Army, it included 78 divisions and ten armoured and mechanised corps including 1,600 tanks, 14,000 pieces of artillery and nearly 3,000 combat aircraft. To the north, it was supported by 1st Byelorussian Front, still in good order after Bagration where it had not even committed its full strength.

Army Group North Ukraine could muster only 34 infantry divisions and six panzer and mechanised divisions. However, the several months' respite since the winter campaigns had allowed the Germans to plan a defence in depth with three defensive lines. These were anchored to five fortified towns to create an apparently formidable defence. As Lvov was assumed to be the target for the Soviets, the most powerful German formation, III Panzer Corps, covered the approaches to the city. Despite attempts to deceive the Germans, it was not possible to

hide the gathering Soviet formations. Wary of the overwhelming artillery barrages which had shattered the forward defences of Army Group Centre, the German HQs ordered forward defenders to pull back to the second line of defence beyond the range of the Red Army artillery. However, Konev's scouts reported this movement and he made a snap decision to send his assault infantry formations against the German defenders without a preparatory barrage. The infantry crashed into III Panzer Corps around Brody, where German artillery largely untouched by their Soviet counterparts was allowed to lay murderous fire on the Red Army formations. Even the Luftwaffe after its poor showing in Bagration had the strength to commit large numbers of ground attack aircraft to the battle. Although the forces around Brody held out for a couple of days, overwhelming numerical superiority swamped the desperate defenders.

General Harpe – commander of Army Group North Ukraine – committed his main reserves, the well-equipped 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions, to stop or slow the Russian offensive. This resulted in a number of vicious tank battles taking the momentum out of the Red Army advance. Faced with the prospect of the offensive grinding to a halt, Konev sent his main armoured reserve through a gap in the German defences directly towards Lvov. More tank



battles ignited as the Germans tried to cut off Soviet tanks now deep behind the lines. By 17 July, T-34s and their supporting infantry had reached the outskirts of the city. However, a German collapse similar to Bagration did not happen. To compound issues for the attackers, heavy rain made many of the roads needed for a rapid advance impassable. For a short time the offensive seemed likely to stall. However, a series of events in favour of the Red Army started to swing the balance back. On 18 July, the 1st Byelorussian Front started its offensive to the north. This time the German defenders did not escape a barrage from the 'Red God of War'. Attacks smashed through the front lines and Soviet exploitation forces charged towards the city of Lublin. On 22 July, Brody finally fell allowing Konev to commit his besieging forces back into the front line. This allowed the Soviets to start the process of surrounding Lvov, threatening to trap a significant number of defenders. Remembering the fate of their colleagues in Army Group Centre, who on so many occasions had allowed themselves to be cut off, the Lvov defenders performed a well organised breakout on 26 July to the relative safety of the Carpathian Mountains. Although this escape was a notable achievement, it opened the way for the Red Army to advance towards the Vistula, behind which lay Western Poland and the Reich itself. Operating

at the end of long supply lines the 1st Ukrainian Front continued to advance, being fought all the way by Army Group North Ukraine, which refused to simply capitulate. A substantial portion of the defenders managed to cross the river and take up prepared defences. By the start of August, the Soviets reached the Vistula and attempted to force crossings. The Germans defended furiously but they could not prevent Konev securing a number of bridgeheads including a significant and dangerous incursion at Sandomierz. To the north, Rokossovsky's 1st Byelorussian Front also reached the river and secured an important bridgehead at Magnuszew before the Germans could stop them. Other Soviet units reached the outskirts of Warsaw on the eastern bank of the river. The Lvov-Sandomierz offensive came to an end and, whilst it had not resulted in the complete collapse of an army group, Soviet forces now had three important bridgeheads pointing like daggers at the heart of the Reich and Berlin itself.

The success of the offensive was to have one terrible consequence for the long suffering Polish population, particularly in Warsaw. Buoyed by the apparent collapse of the German forces and Soviet tanks in plain sight of the capital, the time seemed right for the long-awaited uprising against the German occupiers.

FIGHTING THE LVOV-SANDOMIERZ OFFENSIVE WITH BOLT ACTION

The battles making up the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive differed from Bagration as the German defenders had learned some quick lessons from that disaster. In many cases they were able to fight a capable retreat rather than being swamped in place. There were also a number of small but successful counter-attacks, so scenarios with the Germans taking the role of attacker are more likely. However, they rarely were able to gain a numerical advantage. The Luftwaffe also made an appearance, making up in some respect for its appalling showing during Bagration. Again, German players may find it interesting to experiment using the Forlorn Hope Theatre Selector and attempt to thwart the Red Hordes with less-than-pristine forces.

TERRAIN

The battles of the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive raged across the varied terrain of the Western Ukraine and Southern Poland. Some battles were fought upon the open flat steppes and wheat fields whilst others took place amongst the rolling foothills of the Carpathians. The choice of terrain on the table is very much up to the preferences of the players, depending on the type of game they want to play.

SCENARIOS

GENERAL SCENARIOS

As both sides had the opportunity to attack defend and manoeuvre many of the Battle scenarios in the *Bolt Action* rulebook are suitable, as are the majority of the Attacker–Defender scenarios.

You can also adapt scenarios from this book to the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive but you should ignore any references to snow, ice and other winter-related special rules. Reduced visibility effects can still be applied, but assume it is fog or battlefield smoke that is the source.

The air support special rules in those scenarios should be replaced with the specific Lvov-Sandomierz rules below:

LVOV SANDOMIERZ SCENARIO

- **Scenario 4: Big Game Hunting**

SPECIAL RULES FOR LVOV-SANDOMIERZ SCENARIOS

We suggest that the following special rules can be used for any scenarios intended to be set during the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive. They are however optional and both players must agree to their use.

TOP SECRET

FIRE BRIGADES

As the tide of war turned against the Germans, they found themselves defending a long frontline against a more numerous opponent. Soviet skills in deception meant that an attack could literally materialise on any sector of the front and potentially break through into rear areas with disastrous results. To counter this, the Germans came up with the concept of the ‘fire brigades’, fast-moving armoured battle groups capable of being rapidly deployed to crisis points to deliver a strong counter-attack to halt or at least slow down an enemy incursion. The flexible organisation of the German panzer division allowed it to be split up into components that could be formed into rapid response groups. Ideally this would be a tank battalion of up to 60 tanks, a Panzergrenadier battalion in Hanomag half-tracks and a self-propelled artillery battalion. The 5th Panzer’s defence of the Berezina River crossings in Operation Bagration was a prime example. Despite the German move to a defensive strategy, the ‘fire brigade’ concept preserved the panzer division’s legacy of mobile combined arms operations right up until the final defeat.

Reserves

With Army Group North Ukraine forces spread exceptionally thin across the Ukrainian theatre, little if any manpower remained for defensive reserves. In any scenario where the German player is defending, reserves should not be allowed except when mandatory.

Air support

The Red Army Air Force generally maintained air superiority over the Ukrainian battlefields subjecting German forces to the regular attentions of its fighters and ground attack aircraft. However, occasional Luftwaffe fighter-bomber sorties provided some support for the Axis forces. Forward air observers may be used by both sides.

Minefields

Frontline German defence lines were protected by extensive minefields so for Attacker–Defender scenarios the German player may place minefield sections (see page 141). Rules for the Soviet PT-34 mine-roller tank can be found on page 14.

Preparatory/preliminary bombardment

Soviet artillery once again proved to be deadly in the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive. The Soviet player may always add +1 to their die-roll for preparatory bombardments.

An unequal struggle

During the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive the Red Army was able to concentrate its forces and greatly outnumber its Axis opponents in the majority of its attacks. If you want to simulate this situation in any Attacker–Defender scenarios where the Soviets are the attacking force, we recommend using the special rules for ‘An Unequal Struggle’ (see page 14).

LVOV-SANDOMIERZ THEATRE SELECTORS

AXIS:

- 1944 – Defence of the East Armies of Germany
- Forlorn Hope This book page 16
- 1943–44: A Red Storm Rising (Hungary) *Armies of Italy and the Axis*
- Schwere Panzerabteilungen This book page 19

SOVIET:

- Operation Bagration *Armies of the Soviet Union*
- 53rd Guards Tank Brigade This book page 18

SCENARIO 4: BIG GAME HUNTING

DESCRIPTION

One of the Soviet Union’s true tank heroes was Lt Aleksandr P. Oskin, who joined the Red Army in late 1940. After the German invasion, he commanded a T-26 light tank at Bryansk, Smolensk and at the gates of Moscow. He was seriously injured late in the year and although not fully recovered he volunteered to return to the frontline. He fought as a radio operator in a T-34/76 at Stalingrad only to be wounded again in a German air attack. After additional training during 1943, he was reassigned as a T-34/85 commander fighting in the Operation Bagration campaign.

His most famous engagement took place towards the end of the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive. A member of the 53rd Guards ‘Fastov’ Tank Brigade he was ordered to patrol

the Polish town of Ogledow and link up with the brigade’s 2nd Battalion. Upon reaching his objective Oskin, along with a second T-34, was surprised to find no other Soviet troops present. He also quickly became aware of German tanks occupying the village. Deciding to continue to observe, both tanks moved into a cornfield. The crews and a detachment of attached tank riders gathered cornhusks, concealing the T-34s as haystacks. Scouts from the tank rider teams confirmed that there were at least ten German tanks in the village. Oskin calculated that when the Germans moved out of Ogledow they would travel along a road only 200 metres away from his present position and would present their thinner flank armour to the Soviet tank guns. He was in the perfect position to execute an ambush and he decided to sit and wait.

Tiger II (Henschel turret)





As dawn broke, the throaty roar of tank engines announced that the Germans were beginning to move. Fog had cut the visibility down considerably but soon three large shapes emerged from the gloom. Oskin noted the sharply sloped frontal armour of the Germans and identified them as Panthers, powerful opponents to be sure but vulnerable to his tank's 85mm gun.

Unbeknownst to Oskin, these were not Panthers but a platoon of brand new Tiger II heavy tanks belonging to the 501st Schwere Panzerabteilungen, rushed to the front as a fire brigade force. Had Oskin known the truth perhaps he may have performed differently, but he was confident in his crew and his T-34, which he had named 'Suvorov' after the famous eighteenth-century Russian leader.

This famous action is played as a Tank War scenario. The Tiger IIs of the 501st Schwere Panzerabteilungen are moving out of the town of Ogledow to confront the blocking force of a Red Army tank brigade protecting a forward bridgehead.

OPPOSING FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

Elements of the 53rd Guards Fastov Tank Brigade

Forces should be selected from the 53rd Guards Tank Brigade Theatre Selector found on page 18 of this book.

- The command T34/85 should represent Lt Aleksandr P. Oskin in 'Suvorov'.
- For each T34/85 fielded, the Soviet player should select one tank riders squad.

GERMAN ARMY

Forces should comprise an armoured platoon selected from the Schwere Panzerabteilungen Theatre Selector on page 19 of this book.

- The only tank choice allowed is the Tiger II.

SET-UP

This scenario is based on 'Scenario 7: Envelopment' from the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 140). It should be played along the length of the table with the German and Soviet

table edges being the short ones.

A road should be placed along the full length of the table connecting the German and Soviet table edges. It should not be completely straight but feature a number of curves.

The German set-up zone represents the town of Ogledow and should be represented by a selection of building terrain pieces. The rest of the table should be a mixture of open and rough ground broken up with plenty of woods and other dense terrain to block long fire lanes. Neither side may place minefields. The Soviet player sets up at least half of their units in their set-up area. These units may use the hidden set-up rules (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook 131). Units that are not set up to start with are left in reserve (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook 132). The German player's units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be their entire army if they wish. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve. Reserves are not allowed to outflank in this scenario.

OBJECTIVE

The King Tigers are operating as a spearhead to disrupt and break through the Soviet defenders. Once a gap is opened, additional German forces will be able to attack the vulnerable bridgehead. The Soviets must prevent this.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the German player must move their entire first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the German table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Reduced visibility/fog

The scenario takes place after dawn when low-lying fog is restricting visibility. This game should be played using the night fighting rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 219). The rules for dawn assaults should be applied representing the early morning fog that is eventually burned away by the morning sun.

Sand traps

The countryside around Ogledow is noted for numerous depressions filled with sand. Difficult to spot, these depressions have already trapped a number of the 70-ton Tigers that have inadvertently driven into them. Smaller vehicles and the wide tracked T-34s are not affected. If a Tiger II leaves the confines of the town or the road there is a chance that it will become bogged down in a sand

SCENARIO 4: BIG GAME HUNTING



depression. The German player should roll a dice every time any part of a Tiger II's movement takes it either outside the boundaries of Ogledow or off the main road. On a dice roll of 1, the King Tiger is caught in a sand depression. It should immediately halt and have its order dice flipped to Down. On the next game turn, the Tiger can be given any order, but if it moves it must test again for being caught in the trap.

Oskin's ambush

Oskin managed to camouflage 'Suvorov' with vegetation to hide it from the advancing Germans. The Soviet player may take two T-34/85 and two tank rider squads from their starting force and place them anywhere on the table outside the German set-up zone. These will be counted as hidden set-up units (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook page 131).

BR-635P

The Soviet player has two rounds of high velocity anti-tank shells, which may use once each during the game. When declaring a shot against an enemy tank the Soviet player may nominate it to be a BR-635P round. This adds +1 to the existing penetration value of the gun. For that one shot, a Heavy AT gun will have an enhanced penetration value of +7. The HE radius remains the same. The Soviet player should keep track of the number of rounds used.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least two more victory points than the other then it has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and honours are shared – a draw!

The German player scores one victory point for every Soviet unit destroyed. They also scores two victory points for each of their own units that is inside the Soviet set-up area (even if only partially), and three victory points for each of their own units that has moved off the Soviet table edge before the end of the game.

The Soviet player scores two victory points for every German unit destroyed.

AFTERMATH

When the second Tiger II was in a perfect position, he ordered his gunner, Abubakir Merkhaidorov, to open fire with standard armour-piercing ammunition. The shell smashed into the side of the enemy's turret but appeared not to penetrate. In fact, the impact had likely dislodged equipment and splinters of armour from the inside of the turret, badly injuring some of the crew. Not realising that he had already inflicted a killing blow he ordered two rounds of his meagre stock of BR-635P shells used. These sub-calibre High Velocity Armour Piercing (HVAP) projectiles used a discarding sabot mechanism to achieve



T34/85 with tank riders

much higher muzzle velocities and penetration. Both shots slammed into the hapless Tiger, brewing it up. The remaining German vehicles appeared paralysed as they desperately sought the location of their assailant. With the turret of the lead Tiger slowly turning in his direction, Oskin ordered it to be engaged. The first couple of shots bounced off the turret's thick frontal armour but the third slipped below the 88mm gun, penetrating where hull meets turret, igniting the internal ammunition and blowing the turret clean off.

The trailing King Tiger, seeing its companions burning, hastily attempted to retreat into the village. Flushed with success and bravado Oskin ordered 'Suvorov' out of the cornfield and in hot pursuit. The quicker Soviet medium tank managed to get behind the Tiger and hit it through the thin armour of its engine compartment, disabling it. The demoralised crew bailed out but only to fall into the

hands of the tank riders. The shaken German forces in Ogledow then came under heavy artillery fire and pulled out reporting to their command that they were facing a massive Soviet tank threat. For this feat of military skill, Oskin was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union with Gold Star and the Red Army was able to recover and examine a number of disabled Tiger IIs at their leisure.

Despite having a tank shot out from underneath him on no less than seven occasions, Oskin survived the war and remained in the Red Army until 1971. He died at the age of 89 in Moscow.

HEROES OF THE SOVIET UNION: ALEKSANDR P. OSKIN

Oskin can be included as a tank option in games of Tank War as detailed below.

OSKIN'S T-34/85 'SUVOOROV'

Cost	282pts (Veteran)
Weapons	One turret-mounted heavy anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG and forward-facing hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value	9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules	- Eye for terrain

TOP SECRET

THE VOLKSSTURM

Formed in September 1944 as part of Adolf Hitler's 'Decree for Total War', all males between the age of 16 and 60 were expected to join the Deutscher Volkssturm ('People's Militia'). With a potential manpower of over six million troops, certain senior Nazis were convinced that this force would be crucial in protecting the Reich from the predations of the Western Allies and the Bolshevik hordes. The reality, however, was much different as the Volkssturm were only minimally combat effective. Many of the recruits had little or no combat experience and a significant proportion were physically unfit for battle. Dwindling supplies of modern weapons meant that most recruits were issued with a dizzying variety of sub-standard, obsolete, or captured small arms making the supply of standardised ammunition almost impossible. Uniforms were rarely issued, with only a distinctive armband worn over civilian clothes identifying these men as combatants. The lack of formal uniform made many Volkssturm

members nervous, believing that enemy forces might identify them as partisans and therefore not liable to the protection of the Geneva Convention.

The very first contacts between the Volkssturm and the Soviets on the Oder River were disastrous for the part-time soldiers, who were simply swept aside by the battle-hardened veterans of the Red Army.

However, many of these desperate troops did go on to perform bravely, defending their homes and loved ones against the reviled invaders. This was especially true when more experienced Wehrmacht or SS regulars were attached to Volkssturm formations to bolster their spirits and to provide tactical expertise.

The availability of the Panzerfaust in large numbers also meant that many Soviet tanks fell prey to young boys and old men operating this simple but effective weapon in the closely packed urban terrain of Germany's cities and towns.

THE WARSAW UPRISING



Directly astride the road to Berlin lay the embattled city of Warsaw, the first capital city to fall during World War II and a hotbed of resistance waiting for the right moment to shake off its German occupiers. Now, in the summer of 1944 with the Red Army rapidly approaching the city and the Germans suffering huge military reverses, surely the time was ripe?

In 1940, the Polish government in exile in London ordered the formation of the *Związek Walki Zbrojnej* ('Union for Armed Struggle'), which later evolved into the main Polish resistance force, the *Armia Krajowa* or AK ('Home Army') in February 1942. The AK also played a key role in passing a great deal of sensitive military information back to London, including vital information on the development of the V-2 ballistic missile. Additionally, by 1944 an estimated 65,000 German security troops were required to enforce the occupation, tying down men and materials that could otherwise have been used elsewhere.

COLLAPSE IN THE EAST AND A TIME TO ACT?

By the end of 1943, it was apparent to many including the AK that the strategic balance in Europe was changing. An invasion of France by the Western Allies by mid-1944 was likely and in the East, the Germans had been in constant retreat since the Battle of Kursk. The destruction of Army Group Centre in Operation Bagration had opened the road to Berlin and the city of Warsaw lay directly across that route. In late July, the 1st Byelorussian Front had smashed the remaining German forces in front of the Vistula River and Polish citizens watched with incredulity and growing joy as streams of dishevelled and demoralised troops streamed back across the Warsaw bridges. However, the Polish government in exile knew that waiting for the Soviets was counter-productive to their aims. Stalin had already created his own pro-Soviet puppet government and was eager to install this into any vacuum remaining when the Germans left. The AK needed to act before the Red Army arrived to avoid one occupier replacing another. Instructions passed to the AK ordered that they should start a general uprising against the retreating Germans, secure the city, and await the arrival of the Soviets.

'W' HOUR

The uprising began on 1 August. Experienced AK Kedyw units gathered at several city cemeteries where stockpiles of weapons were hidden. Armbands and uniforms were also distributed as the AK needed to resemble an organised 'army' rather than a simple partisan uprising. Unfortunately, quick responses by the occupying police managed to disrupt several AK formations and the

Soviet Ampulomet team



uprising spluttered into life rather than delivering a hammer blow. German bunkers were manned and waiting for the AK to attack. Several assaults against key installations were driven off by well-coordinated machine gun fire. However, by nightfall, the AK had secured many objectives with German troops surprised and surrendering once they realised that the AK were serious and dangerous opponents. Many German positions that had not initially been taken were now isolated and cut-off.

THE FIRST THREE DAYS

One of the key AK objectives in the first days of fighting was to capture the Kierbedzai and Poniatowski bridges over the Vistula. The Poles were aware that these provided the only direct route for the Soviets to enter Warsaw and if they were not captured the Germans would blow them up first. Given this task were 7,000 AK troops of the Praga district. The initial attacks were poorly coordinated and punished by troops of the German Pioneer Battalion 654 who were rigging the bridges for demolition. The Pioneers were hard and experienced fighters easily capable of handling the untrained men that the AK threw at them. Hope still remained that if the AK could concentrate the majority of the Praga fighters for a second attack then the bridges could be captured. By unfortunate coincidence, however, heavy elements of the 'Hermann Goering' Parachute Panzer Division were disembarking at Praga's station for a deployment to the Vistula frontlines. Hearing the sounds of gunfire, the Fallschirmjäger and their tanks immediately went into action against the insurgents. Not expecting such solid opposition, the Praga troops melted into the urban sprawl or retreated out of the city. The bridges remained in German hands throughout the uprising.

Other targets that eluded capture were the airfields at Okecie and Bielany. The Polish leadership continued to delude themselves that reinforcements and supplies would be flown in from the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, the AK had underestimated the strength of the defending Luftwaffe troops aided by numerous light anti-aircraft guns. Driven off, the attackers lost 200 men.

There were successes in the first 96 hours of the uprising – particularly in the city centre and the Old Town

where a number of strategic and defensible structures including the State Security building were captured. Several captured storehouses contained ammunition, Waffen-SS camouflaged uniforms, and food. The ammo and uniforms went to the fighters and the food to the civilians. Contemporary photographs of the AK show many of them fighting in 'pea dot pattern' camouflage smocks and other pieces of Waffen-SS uniform. Also captured was the main power plant, which provided power to many of the AK-owned small factories and facilities producing firearms and other weapons. On the first day, the AK had lost nearly 2,000 men against 600 German losses. The AK also captured weapons and ammunition from the Germans including several tanks, 15 pieces of artillery, a number of Panzerfausts and – perhaps most importantly – 70 medium machine guns, used to bolster AK defensive positions. The Poles threw up numerous barricades across streets as defensive positions or to isolate various enemy strongholds. Warsaw civilians worked tirelessly to maintain these very formidable structures constructed from rubble, timber and vehicles. One barricade featured a captured Hetzer tank destroyer as its strongpoint.

GERMAN RESPONSES

German responses during the first three days were poorly coordinated and sporadic as local commanders tried to come to terms with the nature and intensity of the uprising. Little could be done to relieve small German garrisons cut off by the AK. Many local security forces underestimated the will and resistance of the AK and several hastily prepared attacks were stopped with heavy

casualties. Ill-considered tank attacks against AK defenders armed with PIATs and Panzerfausts resulted in the capture of two Panthers and a Tiger.

But in the streets of Warsaw people began to wonder, just where was the Red Army?

THE BATTLES FOR WOLA AND OCHOTA

By 5 August, the Germans had gathered 5,000 men in preparation for an assault on the less well-defended Wola and Ochota districts to break through to isolated German forces in the Bruhl Palace. However, rather than concentrating his forces, the German commander split them into four separate assaults which aided the fully stretched AK troops. The brutality of these attacks did not break the spirit of the uprising, but pushed the remaining population of Warsaw into wholehearted support of the AK.

The outer defences of Wola and then Ochota collapsed, but the Germans now knew that a swift victory would elude them and Warsaw would have to be recaptured city block by city block. The build-up of German artillery and the return of the Luftwaffe to the skies of Warsaw saw many areas of the city flattened before assault troops were committed.

Realising that they were about to be surrounded, the AK made plans to pull out of Wola and Ochota. Breaking up into smaller groups to evade capture, many hundreds of AK troops were able to escape via the sewer system, fuelling several accounts of vicious hand-to-hand combat under the streets of Warsaw.

BATTLE FOR THE OLD TOWN

With Wola and Ochota now under German control the next target would be the Old Town. This would prove to be a much tougher nut to crack as it was defended by around 6,000 AK fighters, many of them battle-hardened in the earlier fighting. The AK were also learning to further exploit the sewer system to their advantage, not only to move reinforcements around but also to mount occasional daring raids behind the German frontlines. On 11 and 12 August, large-scale German attacks were repulsed by AK troops with several StuG III and Jagdpanzer Hetzers being disabled by AK anti-tank teams. Deprived of armoured

TOP SECRET

WHERE WAS THE RED ARMY?

Whilst Stalin's lack of enthusiasm to help the AK in its liberation of Warsaw may have slowed the Red Army, Guderian's counter offensive against the 2nd Tank Army outside Warsaw made Soviet intervention less likely. Also starting on 1 August, the attack by two Panzer Corps temporarily halted the Red Army's advance. However, like many recent German counter-offensives, it was a 'paper tiger' and petered out in the face of Soviet reinforcement. Whilst the Soviet frontline was never in any real danger, the offensive did present Stalin with an excuse. Claiming that Red Army forces had been pushed back with significant losses, he stopped the advance on Warsaw, pulling out armoured formations and replacing them with infantry. In truth, the Red Army did not need to take Warsaw – it could easily be isolated and bypassed.

Despite Stalin's claims, the Red Army could still have supported the AK with artillery and air power yet this never materialised, and Luftwaffe Stukas were able to fly unmolested over the city.



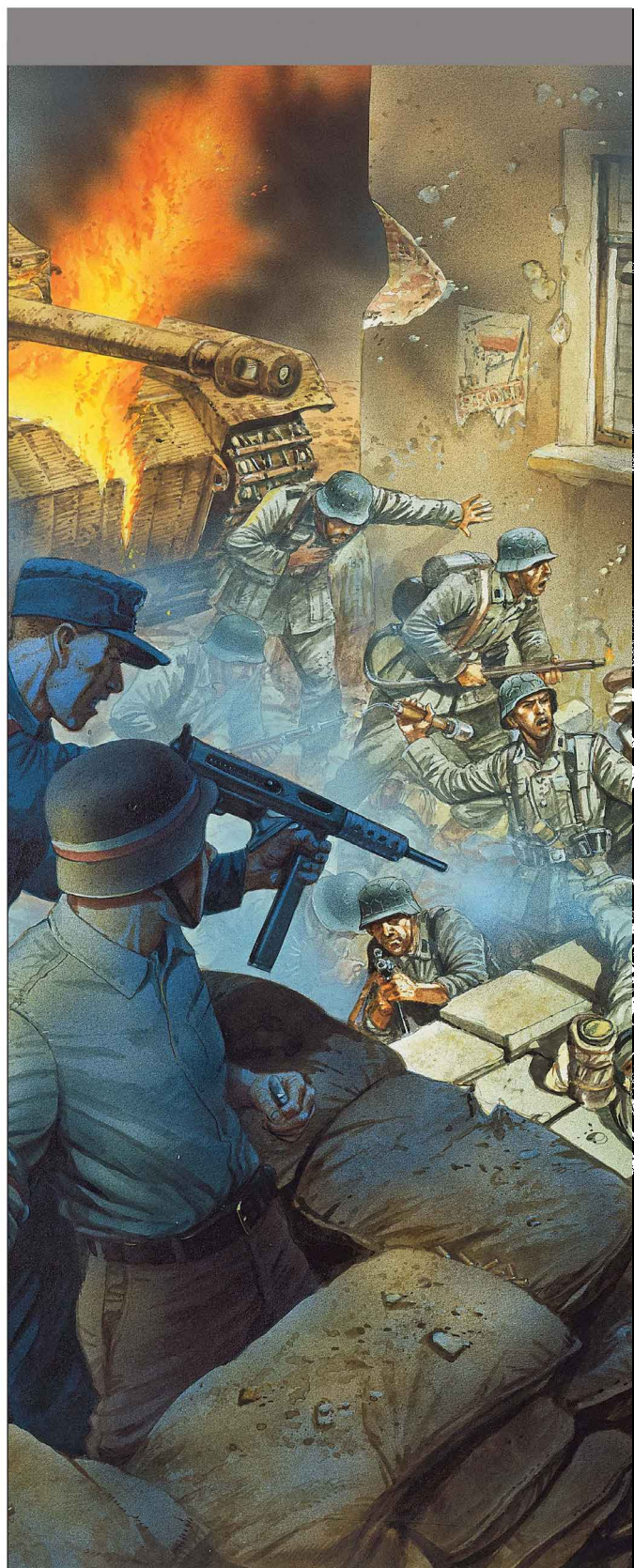
AK TANK HUNTERS

In the early stage of the uprising, German tanks were sent into action against the AK barricades with little or no infantry support, their commanders expecting the sheer physical presence of the tanks to intimidate and overwhelm the defenders. What the Germans did not expect was the expert usage by the AK of captured Panzerfaust anti-tank projectiles and British-supplied PIAT projectors. The PIAT was an especially effective weapon as its lack of back blast made detection of its launch point very difficult. Tank crews coming under 'shaped charge' attack were likely to bail out after a non-disabling hit, knowing a second, more deadly, shot might be on its way. Two valuable Tiger Is were picked off by PIATs in the Ochota district whilst other armoured vehicles succumbed to a rain of Molotov Cocktails and British supplied 'Gammon bombs'. The Germans certainly did not fail to take note of the AK's tactics, applying many of them in the fight against Soviet armour in Berlin.

support and pinned down by AK snipers, the German infantry struggled in the street fighting, lacking the training and the experience of junior officers to direct and motivate them. In the first week of fighting in the Old Town, their losses were on average 25–30%. The Poles were proving themselves more than a match and could only be dislodged when heavy firepower was brought to bear. One weapons system that did prove successful for the Germans were remote-control demolition vehicles such as the Goliath and the larger, manned Borgward IV vehicles, which proved effective in reducing prepared defences. However, the poor showing of the German infantry in following-up attacks allowed the Poles to rebuild the defences. After a week of hard fighting in the Old Town the Germans had made little, if any, progress.

During the second week, additional German artillery was deployed, including a huge 600mm 'Karl' self-propelled mortar, which hurled 2-ton shells into the centre of Warsaw, creating craters up to 15 metres wide and 5 metres deep. Much of the shelling was indiscriminate, which had appalling impacts on the 40,000 civilians trapped in the area, and the loss of the water supply to the area only made matters worse. With the arrival of additional pioneer units supported by a number of Brummbär and Sturmtiger heavy assault guns, even the most reinforced AK defensive position became vulnerable. By 25 August, the AK commanders decided that the Old Town should be abandoned and plans were put in place for an evacuation, again using the sewer system.

Around 4,500 AK fighters successfully escaped whilst other troops fought a furious rearguard action to protect their escape. Efforts to create a corridor for the trapped civilians mostly failed. In the end, 2,500 wounded AK fighters and 35,000 civilians remained to face an uncertain fate.



THE CITY CENTRE

Despite the heavy fighting elsewhere, the city centre, liberated on the first day of the uprising, was largely untouched during August with only a few German attacks on its perimeter. Several small German garrisons were still holding out but they were isolated and starving. Some supplies did get through as German armoured vehicles made hazardous supply runs through the streets, but often the vehicles were destroyed or disabled. One main centre of German resistance was the PAST building – a multi storied structure containing the central telephone exchange. Several German attempts to relieve the building failed and after 20 days of siege, the AK managed to force the defenders to surrender in a well-planned and well-executed assault using a number of home-built flamethrowers.

On 3 September, the AK repulsed three major attacks. The Germans resorted to area bombardment and many civilian enclaves were deliberately targeted. Slowly the Germans began to gain ground as more reinforcements poured into the city and the AK's ammunition and supply situation became desperate. If they reached the city centre, the Germans would be able to split the defenders in half and badly disrupt their internal lines of communication. In two weeks of hard fighting, the Germans lost 5,000 troops and had gained a mere 600 metres of territory. But the writing was on the wall and without external help the uprising was clearly doomed. Many in the AK command began to contemplate the possibility of surrender.

THE RED ARMY ACTS

News of the impending collapse of the uprising appeared to have reached the Soviet authorities via a number of Soviet military intelligence officers in the Polish ranks. The Red Air Force made an appearance over the city and ten German aircraft fell victim to their guns. The 47th Guards Tank Corps crashed into the German defences in Praga on the eastern banks of the Vistula, destroying the defenders in the space of two days. In full retreat, the survivors fled across the river and the German Pioneers blew all four bridges. Several divisions of the 1st Polish Army, *Ludowe Wojsko Polskie* (LWP), were brought forward within clear sight of the Polish fighters across the river giving a tantalising glimpse of possible salvation. Almost at the same time airdrops from the Western Allies increased, finally culminating in a large formation of heavily escorted B-17s dropping 1,200 supply containers. Despite only a small amount actually falling behind the AK lines, this was enough to restore some real hope. The Germans, fearing the threat of a Soviet link up with the AK, were galvanised into action and began an assault against the defenders of the Czeriakow district, which

directly faced the Soviet forces across the river. On 15 September, troops of the Polish 3rd Infantry Division crossed the Vistula by boat and made contact with the AK fighters. The joy of reunion was tempered when it was discovered that only a single battalion had made the crossing, the rest of the division remaining on the eastern bank. Red Army artillery remained ominously silent and the skies were again empty of Soviet aircraft. Although another 1,200 LWP troops crossed the river on 17 September this was clearly a token effort. The German assaults continued, supported by tanks and artillery. Frantic calls by the LWP for artillery support and reinforcements remained unanswered. The end in Czeriakow came quickly as the vastly outnumbered defenders withdrew via the sewers to final defensive positions in Mokotow and Zoliborz. Strong German forces were now firmly entrenched between the Soviets and the AK.

The LWP's 1st Infantry division attempted additional small-scale crossings of the Vistula, but they were crushed. In total, the LWP lost over 4,000 men for absolutely no gain.

THE END

Free Warsaw was now reduced to just the city centre, and the Mokotow and Zoliborz districts. The remaining AK troops gathered whatever ammunition they had left and awaited the final onslaught. This time, though, the attacks would come from a much higher calibre of German troops. The failure of the Red Army to intervene had encouraged the German command to release veteran troops for the final mop-up operations, including the 19th Panzer Division, elements of the 'Hermann Goering' Parachute Panzer Division and SS Panzer Divisions 'Totenkopf' and 'Wiking'. Against such troops, the AK were severely outmatched and had to give ground. *SturmTigers*, *Brummbärs* and *StuGs* fired relentlessly on defensive positions at point-blank range whilst veteran German infantry protected them from AK anti-tank teams. Between 23 and 27 September, the Germans overwhelmed the defenders of Mokotow and Zoliborz. The AK command knew that the struggle was over and surrender was a necessity. Fortunately for the survivors, the Western Allies had made it very clear that if the Germans did not treat the AK as part of the Polish military, any transgressions would be classed as war crimes. Many German commanders appeared to heed this as many captured AK men were treated well, being recognised as enemy combatants rather than resistance fighters. When all AK forces laid down their arms, they were allowed to parade before being transferred to regular POW camps.

Warsaw itself would not be spared Hitler's wrath and the city was systematically flattened in revenge for the

Poles choosing to resist. It was not until 12 January the following year that Soviet troops finally entered the city as part of the Vistula-Oder offensive.

During the 63-day battle the AK lost 15,000 men

whilst the Germans recorded 25,000 casualties. The real toll however was upon the 200,000 civilians who died during that brief bid for freedom.

FIGHTING THE WARSAW UPRISING WITH BOLT ACTION

Whilst the Warsaw Uprising was in many ways a tragedy, there are many stories of incredible bravery and valour as an irregular force of lightly armed patriots fought and struggled against a foe who underestimated them and received many a 'bloody nose'. This should provide Bolt Action players with many options to experiment with scenarios using resistance fighters/patriots versus regular forces in an urban environment. The ideas here should not be considered as appropriate to Warsaw only but also to the many other examples of civilian and paramilitary uprisings on both the Eastern and Western Fronts. In most cases, the patriots will be on the defensive and heavily outnumbered. The modifications noted for 'An Unequal Struggle' on page 14 of this book can be used to represent this.

TERRAIN

Warsaw was a densely urbanised city in 1944, criss-crossed by many small streets that could easily be barricaded with rubble, carts and various wrecked vehicles. In many of the areas defended by the AK, the streets were only wide enough for one armoured vehicle to pass, making armoured assaults very difficult. Large brick buildings could be easily reinforced, creating many impressive fortifications. Defenders had to be winkled out with house-to-house assaults or blasted out by heavy artillery or demolition vehicles. As the battle progressed, the destruction of buildings created large area of ruins and scattered large amounts of rubble into the streets. Both sides became proficient at using the city's extensive sewer system for both retreat and surprise raids.

SCENARIOS GENERAL SCENARIOS

All of the scenarios in the *Bolt Action* rulebook can be adapted for the Warsaw Uprising, but the following Attacker-Defender scenarios are particularly applicable:

Scenario 7: Envelopment: On many occasions the AK fighters were forced to hold their ground long enough to allow reinforcements to arrive or to buy time for civilians and other support personnel to escape.

Scenario 8: Manhunt: During the intense street

fighting, both sides were constantly trying to gather information and intelligence on the opposition to find weak points in defences or timings of assaults. This scenario can be played with either side as the attacker trying to capture an important prisoner who might have key information.

Scenario 9: Point Defence: During the uprising there were many strategic installations that proved vital for both sides. These could be administrative buildings, public utilities, bridges and airfield facilities. Whilst in the later stages of the campaign the German player would likely be the attacker in the first couple of days of the campaign the AK were on the offensive and many defended German positions came under attack. This gives an opportunity for scenarios where either side may be the attacker.

Scenario 10: Surrounded: As the battle for Warsaw progressed, many AK troops found themselves surrounded and in a fight to the death. This scenario would perfectly represent a battle where AK fighters are trying to hold a perimeter whilst wounded comrades and civilians are attempting to escape via Warsaw's extensive sewer system.

SPECIAL RULES FOR WARSAW UPRISING SCENARIOS

These following rules intended to help represent the environment of the Warsaw Uprising are optional and both players must agree to their use.

Preparatory bombardment

Although the AK captured a few German artillery pieces they were never able to coordinate them to lay down an effective barrage. The AK player may never use a preparatory bombardment.

Air support

With the Soviet air force generally unwilling to challenge the Luftwaffe over Warsaw, the German player should be allowed to use forward air observers. The AK had no air support and cannot include FACs in their platoon choices.



City fight

The Battle for Warsaw was conducted in a dense urban environment and all special rules for city fighting should be used where desired (see page 145).

The AK also excelled in the tactical use of sewers so the outflanking order test to arrive via sewer for AK units remains as -1 rather than the -2 required by other nationalities.

AK barricades

The residents of Warsaw became very adept at creating barricades to block their streets. They proved highly resilient to German assaults and when damaged were quickly repaired by the eager civilians of Warsaw.

- In any scenario where the AK is the defender, they may place two AK barricades in their deployment zone. Each AK barricade will have a maximum width of 6" and a depth of 1".
- Any troops whose bases touch the barricade will receive

protection:

- An AK barricade will provide a -3 cover bonus to its defenders for non-HE fire.
- HE weapons can damage an AK barricade and follow all the rules for a building in this is respect.
- Any unit assaulted across an AK barricade counts as being in a defensive position (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook page 76).
- Tanks are not allowed to assault or push aside AK barricades.
- Goliath and Borgward IV demolition vehicles may be used against AK barricades.

WARSAW UPRISING SPECIAL SCENARIOS

The following two scenarios are representative of some of the actions that took place during the Warsaw Uprising.

Scenario 5: Man the Barricades

Scenario 6: Kubus and the Grey Wolf

WARSAW UPRISING THEATRE SELECTORS

AXIS:

- 1944 – Defence of the East *Armies of Germany*
- Forlorn Hope This book page 16
- Assault on Warsaw This book page 51

AK:

- Armia Krajowa This book page 50

WHAT IF? SCENARIOS

Throughout the uprising the Poles truly believed that some form of Allied intervention would occur to save them from their German occupiers. History shows us that this did not happen. However, it would be interesting to play some scenarios where the Red Army did not halt at the Vistula but actually entered Warsaw in support of the *Armia Krajowa*. 'Scenario 14: Enter the ROA' could be easily changed to reflect a Warsaw battle by replacing the ROA forces with Soviet units chosen from the Operation Bagration Theatre Selector. Czech patriot units would be replaced by AK units and a German force created from the Assault on Warsaw Theatre Selector.

For an even more unlikely hypothetical scenario, what if some of the more naïve organisers of the uprising believed that British/Free Polish paratroopers would be sent to Warsaw to intervene on the side of the AK. In this case, a British Paratrooper force selected from the 1944 – Market Garden Theatre Selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book could replace the ROA (hopefully they will

be carrying lots of PIATs!).

The final fantasy scenario is a clash between British/Polish paratroopers and Soviet forces in Warsaw for control of the city. Both the government in exile and the Soviets were keen to have their officials put in charge of the city. Bolt Action allows you to game these contra-factual scenarios, so have fun!

ARMIA KRAJOWA THEATRE SELECTOR

A Polish force for the *Armia Krajowa* must comprise one or more reinforced platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each reinforced platoon is made up as follows:

ARMIA KRAJOWA REINFORCED PLATOON

1 Lieutenant (First or Second)

2 Infantry squads: Kedyw squad, AK Militia squad

plus:

Headquarters

0–1 Captain or Major

0–1 Medic

Infantry

0–4 Infantry squads: Kedyw squad, AK Militia squad, Soviet Rifle squad*, Soviet Light Machine Gun squad*

0–1 Machine gun team
0–1 Sniper team
0–1 Flamethrower team
0–2 Anti-tank teams (PIAT)

Artillery

0–1 gun from:
Anti-tank gun: PaK 36, 45mm 1937*
Artillery: Light gun

Tanks, Tank destroyers, Assault guns, Self-propelled artillery and Anti-aircraft vehicles

0–1 Armoured car (Kubus)
0–1 Captured tank from: Panther, Hetzer
0–1 Captured transport vehicle: SdKfz 251/1 (Grey Wolf modification)

* These squads and anti-tank guns represent elements of the Polish 1st Army (LWP), which crossed the Vistula between 15 and 19 September.

GERMAN WARSAW UPRISING THEATRE SELECTOR

A German force for the Warsaw Uprising must comprise one or more reinforced platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each reinforced platoon is made up as follows:

German Warsaw Uprising Platoon

1 Lieutenant (First or Second)
2 Infantry squads: Heer Grenadier infantry squads, Sicherungs squad, Feldgendarmerie squad

plus:

Headquarters

0–1 Captain or Major
0–1 Medic

Waffen SS Squad

Infantry

0–4 Infantry squads: Heer Grenadier infantry squads, Heer Veteran Grenadier squads, Waffen-SS squads (late war), Sicherungs squad, Feldgendarmerie squad, Osttruppen squads, Luftwaffe Field Division squad or a maximum of 1 Sturmpanziere squad

0–1 MMG team
0–1 Sniper team
0–1 Mortar team
0–1 Flamethrower team
0–1 Goliath team
0–1 Anti-tank team

Artillery

0–1 gun from:
Anti-tank gun: PaK 36, PaK 38, PaK 40
Artillery gun: Light, medium or heavy
Anti-aircraft gun: Flak 38, Flakvierling 38, Flak 36 or 88mm AA/AT Flak 36

Armoured cars

0–1 Armoured car from: SdKfz 222, SdKfz 231 (8-Rad), SdKfz 234/1, SdKfz 234/2, SdKfz 234/3, SdKfz 250/9, SdKfz 250/10, SdKfz 250/11, captured Soviet BA-10

Tanks, Tank destroyers, Assault guns, Self-propelled artillery and Anti-aircraft vehicles

0–1 vehicle from: Panzer III Ausf J, Panzer IV Ausf G, H, StuG III Ausf E, G, StuH 42, StuG IV, Panther Ausf A, G, Tiger I, Jagdpanzer IV, Hetzer, Brummbär, Sturmtiger, SdKfz 251/9 Stummel, SdKfz 251/16 Flammpanzerwagen, SdKfz 251 Stuka zu Fuss, SdKfz 10/4 with Flak 38, captured Italian M14/41 (PzKpfw 736)

Transports and Tows

0–1 Transport vehicle per infantry unit in the reinforced platoon from: SdKfz 10, SdKfz 7, Truck, Maultier, Kubelwagen, Schwimmwagen, SdKfz 251/1, SdKfz 250/1, Heavy field car, and a maximum of 1 SdKfz 251/10
0–1 Tow from: SdKfz 10, SdKfz 7, Truck, Maultier, SdKfz 4, Raupenschlepper Ost, Kettenkrad, Heavy field car, Horse-drawn limber



ADDITIONAL ARMIA KRAJOWA UNITS

OFFICER

Many AK officers were members of the pre-war Polish Army who had hidden their uniforms after the Polish surrender. Whilst many officers suffered as prisoners of the Germans and the Soviets, enough remained to become the

leaders of the AK. Additional officers, often referred to as 'Silent Dark Ones', were Polish servicemen who had escaped to Britain and had now flown back to their homeland after being trained by British Special Forces.

Cost	- Second Lieutenant 'Podporucznik' 35pts (Inexperienced), 50pts (Regular), 65pts (Veteran) - First Lieutenant 'Porucznik' 60pts (Inexperienced), 75pts (Regular), 90pts (Veteran) - Captain 95pts (Inexperienced), 110pts (Regular), 125pts (Veteran) - Major 135pts (Inexperienced), 150pts (Regular), 165pts (Veteran)
Composition	1 officer and up to 2 further men
Weapons	Pistol or rifle or SMG as depicted on the models
Options	- The officer may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +7pts per man (Inexperienced), +10pts per man (Regular) or +13pts per man (Veteran)

MEDIC

Many of the brave men and women of Warsaw took on the role of medics for the AK. The nature of the street-to-street fighting meant that these individuals were always in

the frontline. Many died when putting themselves in harm's way to help an AK comrade.

Cost	30pts (Veteran Infantry)
Composition	1 medic and up to 2 further men
Weapons	Pistol or none as depicted on the model
Options	- The medic may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +13pts per man (Veteran)

KEDYW SQUAD

The Kedyw (Kierownictwo Dywersji or Directorate of Sabotage and Diversion) units were normally recruited in country areas outside Warsaw and trained in the arts of sabotage and assassination. Training was often given by Polish officers who had been tutored by British Special Forces. These troops were by far the best in the AK and were a match for any German security forces. Trained to be tank hunters armed with the British PIAT and captured Panzerfausts, they were a significant threat to German

armour. Unfortunately, many of the Kedyw units were destroyed early in the uprising when prematurely committed to the fight. Although many Kedyw units were lost in Warsaw, others survived to continue the struggle in the countryside. Here they were hunted not only by the Germans but also the Soviet NKVD who saw them as counter-revolutionaries and supporters of the government in exile in London.

Cost	130pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 9 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Up to 2 men can be armed with Panzerfausts at +5pts each - Entire squad can be armed with anti-tank grenades at +2pts each - Up to 1 man be armed with an LMG for +20pts – another soldier becomes the loader - Gain tank hunter rule if all armed with anti-tank grenades
Special Rules	- Kedyw sections count as fanatics

AK MILITIA SQUAD

These were the rank and file troops of the Warsaw Uprising who also operated as partisans in rural areas. Deeply committed to the cause of a free Poland these militia squads were a hotchpotch of office and factory workers, students and farmers. A university professor could find

himself alongside a postal worker, a car mechanic and a student. Despite being well organised, these groups often suffered from weapons shortages. Despite terrible losses suffered during the uprising, the militia fought to the inevitable end.

Cost	70pts (Inexperienced Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 9 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 10 additional militia for +7pts each - Equip all men with anti-tank grenades for +2pts each
Special Rules	- Green - Gain tank hunter trait if all armed with anti-tank grenades

MACHINE GUN TEAM

AK MG teams were usually armed with the Polish 7.92mm ckm wz.30 machine gun based on the Browning M1917. However, the most prized weapon was a German MG-42. Some of these fearsome weapons were captured

in combat but a surprising number along with various rifles and machine pistols were sold to the AK before the uprising by corrupt German officials.

Cost	35pts (Inexperienced Infantry), 50pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	3 men
Weapons	1 MMG
Special Rules	- Team weapon - Fixed

SNIPER TEAM

Any AK volunteers with a natural marksmanship ability took on the sniper role. The AK knew it could not beat the German forces in a stand-up fight so the objective was to harry and delay their opponents long enough for external help to arrive. The sniper's natural ability to keep the enemies' heads down and to eliminate motivational officers greatly assisted that goal.

Cost	50pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	2 men
Weapons	1 Rifle
Special Rules	- Sniper - Team weapon

TOP SECRET

AK PANZERS

Some of the most surprising additions to the ranks of the AK were a small number of German armoured fighting vehicles captured during early skirmishes. A Hetzer tank destroyer and two armoured cars were captured during the battle for the Post Office and more significantly, two Panthers were taken at the Karolkowa Street barricades. In addition, a Tiger I was briefly in Polish hands until a young freedom fighter ruined its transmission whilst taking it on an unauthorised 'joyride'. The Hetzer was renamed 'Chwat' after the AK unit that captured it, whilst one of the Panthers took the name 'Magda'. All three vehicles were used effectively against German units until they finally succumbed to either disabling hits or the Poles' inability to find not fuel and ammunition but rather replacement electric batteries!

FLAMETHROWER TEAM

It came as a great shock to German troops in Warsaw when they came under attack from flamethrowers – probably the most effective and feared of all assault weapons. It was even more surprising when they were discovered to be inventions of Warsaw underground weapons factories, which had been making arms and ammunition right under the Germans' noses.

Whilst not as reliable or effective as military-grade

flamethrowers, they were still highly effective in driving off German attacks and neutralising strongpoints.

- **Note:** An AK flamethrower team is slightly more resilient than other similar teams as it has a crew of 4 comprising a commander, flamethrower gunner and 2 additional men carrying fuel cans and spare compressed air bottles.

Cost	50pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	4 men
Weapons	1 Flamethrower
Special Rules	- Flamethrower - Team weapon - Home-built: On a natural to-hit roll of 1, roll an additional die: 1–2 Nothing bad happens 3–5 Worrying fuel leak, team gains 2 pin markers 6 The flamethrower explodes, instantly killing the team

ANTI-TANK TEAM

The AK knew that German armour would be one of the main dangers facing them when the uprising began. Although most units carried Molotov cocktails and primitive anti-tank grenades it was clear that many fighters would die trying to get close enough to attack German vehicles – they needed a ranged option.

The concerns were relayed to London and it was arranged for a number of PIAT projectors to be dropped to the AK

outside of Warsaw. Some 300 of these weapons were supplied. When the uprising began the AK made very good use of them, destroying a number of German tanks and other armoured vehicles. In the initial stages of the uprising, German infantry was either unable or unwilling to escort the panzers and certain areas of Warsaw became no-go areas for German armour. The AK also effectively used the PIAT shaped-charge warheads to pierce bunker and other strongpoint walls.

Cost	40pts (Regular Infantry)
Composition	2 men
Weapons	1 PIAT
Special Rules	- Team weapon - Shaped charge

KUBUS ARMoured CAR/PERSONNEL CARRIER

One of the most interesting weapons used by the AK during the uprising was Kubus ('Little Jacob') an improvised hybrid armoured car/personnel carrier. It is believed only one was built, constructed using the chassis of a Chevrolet 157 truck. The conversion from truck to AFV took less than two weeks in the Kwiatkowski car repair shop in the Warsaw city centre, using whatever materials were to hand at the time. The name given to the

vehicle, 'Little Jacob', was the code name of one of the wives of the constructors killed in action with the AK at the beginning of the month.

Kubus' protection comprised of steel plates welded onto a steel frame, proof against small arms fire. Her armament composed of a single Soviet-built DP machine gun and one of the AK's home-built flamethrowers. She could also carry up to 12 troops and their personal arms.

Cost	134pts (Regular)
Weapon	1 forward-facing pintle-mounted LMG, 1 forward-facing flamethrower
Damage Value	7+ (armoured carrier)
Transport	- up to 12 men

CAPTURED GERMAN SDKFZ 251/1 'SZARY WILK' (GREY WOLF)

The AK captured a number of German SdKfz 251 halftracks during the uprising, but the most famous was a vehicle originally serving with SS Panzer Division 'Wiking'. Originally used as an ambulance by the Germans the luckless halftrack took a wrong turning and was

captured by AK troops. Initially called 'Jas' it was later modified with the addition of a thin plate roof and was mounted with an elderly Hotchkiss 14.8mm machinegun. It was renamed 'Szary Wilk' and was used in two other attacks on the Warsaw University.

Cost	79pts (Inexperienced – captured vehicle)
Weapon	Pintle-mounted HMG covering the forward arc
Damage Value	7+ (armoured carrier)
Transport	- up to 12 men

NOTES ON USING CAPTURED ENEMY VEHICLES

In terms of Bolt Action, a strict application of the rules for force selection does not normally allow you to field tanks and guns from other forces. However, in all theatres of the war, combatants have made use of enemy materiel that had been abandoned or captured. Therefore, there are a few exceptions to this, such as the use of captured Axis vehicles during the Warsaw and Prague uprisings.

Following the same spirit of these exceptions, we think it is great fun to collect a tank or a gun from an enemy force and paint it in your own colour scheme – such as a Hetzer or Panther sporting the colours of the Czech flag or T-34s in the colours and markings of General Vlasov's ROA Forces. Please feel free to undertake these fun modelling tasks, so long as you pay the correct points for

them and they are taken simply to replace an equivalent 'slot'. As a rule of thumb, we tend to apply one further limit when we allow forces to purchase enemy 'captured' vehicles and guns – the unit can be purchased only as Inexperienced or at best as Regular (if there are good records of a particular vehicle/gun being used in abundance by the enemy). For certain scenarios where militia or civilians have captured and are using an enemy vehicle, it is wise to apply the unreliable rule:

Unreliable: A captured vehicle's or gun's chronic lack of ammunition and spare parts means it often suffers from extreme operational unreliability – if the unit suffers one or more pin markers as a result of an enemy attack, it automatically suffers one further pin marker in addition.

ADDITIONAL GERMAN WARSAW UPRISING UNITS CAPTURED VEHICLES

German police units operated a small number of ex-Italian Army M14/41 tanks and Soviet BA-10 armoured cars.

They should be classed as Inexperienced.

POLIZEI M14/41 MEDIUM TANK (PZKPFW 41)

Cost	108pts (Inexperienced)
Weapon	1 turret-mounted light anti-tank gun with co-axial MMG and 2 hull-mounted MMG
Damage Value	8+ (light tank)
Special Rules	- Vulnerable: Because of the riveted construction, all shots to the side and rear of the vehicle get an additional +1 penetration modifier (i.e., in total +2 for side hits and +3 for rear hits).

POLIZEI BA-10 ARMoured CAR

Cost	86pts (Inexperienced)
Weapon	1 turret-mounted light anti-tank gun with co-axial LMG and 1 forward-firing LMG
Damage Value	7+ (armoured car)

SCENARIO 5: MAN THE BARRICADES

DESCRIPTION

The forces of the *Armia Krajowa* have now been resisting German attempts to recapture Warsaw for nearly 24 days.

A popular rising that began in the hope that the rapidly approaching Red Army would arrive to liberate the city is turning into a grim battle of attrition that the AK cannot possibly win in the long term. Surrender is unthinkable though, as the Polish citizens of Warsaw know only too well what terrible fate awaits them if the Germans regain control.

All across the city, heroic cadres of AK volunteers inflict disproportionate casualties on the German attackers, whilst the civilians busy themselves feeding the fighters, tending to their wounded or sharing in the back-breaking labour of keeping the vital street barricades repaired. Though resources and hope are running short, again and again the defenders rally to the call of 'Man the Barricades', as yet another wave of German attacks begin.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario represents a small cadre of AK Kedyw and militia defending a sector of the Old Town of Warsaw

against a mixed force of Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS and various paramilitary police units. The AK player picks a force to an agreed number of points. The German player may then choose a force with three times that points value. For example, if the AK decides on 500 points, the German may choose 1,500 points.

AK units should be selected from the *Armia Krajowa* Theatre Selector (see page 50).

The AK player is also allowed to designate two strongpoints. These should use the rules for bunkers (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook page 127), but actually represent buildings deliberately fortified by the fighters and civilian volunteers. In addition, the AK player receives three hard cover linear obstacles. These should be no more than 6" in length and represent the types of barricades placed across roads by the Warsaw defenders. These barricades are impassable terrain for vehicles but can be destroyed by Borgward IV or Goliath demolition vehicles. Strongpoints should be large enough to hold a single section of infantry.

German units should be selected from the Assault on Warsaw Theatre Selector (see page 51).

Army Krajowa fighters emerge from the Warsaw rubble.





SET-UP

Two roads 6" wide should run from one long table edge to the other long table edge, roughly bisecting the table into three equal sections. A third road, also 6" wide, should run from the middle point of one short table edge to the opposite short table edge. This will form two crossroads. The rest of the table should be covered with as many buildings, ruins or rubble scenery pieces as you can find. If you find it difficult obtaining enough terrain, then make the battlefield smaller and adjust force points to compensate.

The German player selects one of the short table edges as their entry point and then places four objective markers; two must be placed within 6" of each of the crossroads whilst the remaining two should be placed somewhere in the final third of the table furthest from the German player's table entry edge.

Once the objectives have been placed, the AK player sets up their strongpoints and barricades.

AK units must be deployed first and can be placed anywhere on the table as long as it is 12" or more away from the German player entry table edge. AK units can start the game with dug-in status (See scenario special rules on page 139 of this book) and may use

hidden set-up (see hidden set-up on page 131 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook). One AK infantry unit must be placed in each of the strongpoints.

The German player's units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The player must designate up to half of their force (rounding up) to form the first assault wave. All other German units are left as reserves.

OBJECTIVE

The AK player must hold the objectives and prevent their capture by the Germans. Warsaw must fight on!

The German player must take the objectives; this revolt must be crushed!

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

On Turn 1, the German player must move all the units they designated as the first wave onto the table. They can enter the table from any point on the German Army's short table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. No order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Members of the Polish Peoples Army, 1944, by Mike Chappell © Osprey Publishing Ltd.
Taken from Men at Arms 142: Partisan Warfare.



City fighting

'Man the Barricades' uses the city fighting rules which are found on page 145 of this book.

Reinforcements

AK reinforcements might arrive from among the scattered units of defenders fighting around the city – or they might not. At the end of each turn roll a die to see what units, if any, arrive to help the defenders:

1-3	Nothing. Any potential reinforcements are pinned down in other sectors.
4-5	1 AK Militia squad
6	1 AK Kedyw squad + 1 PIAT team

Casualties incurred during the battle can be recycled as extra reinforcements as required. Reinforcements can enter the table from any point on the short table edge opposite the one chosen by the German Army, and must be given a Run or an Advance order. No order test is required to move units onto the table as reinforcements.

Preparatory bombardment: The German player rolls a die: on a 2+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the AK positions. On a result of 1 the barrage fails to materialise,

but you have your orders and the attack must go ahead as planned.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

When the game ends, the winner will be the player controlling the most objectives. An objective is captured if one of your units is within 3" of it at the end of the final turn. There must be no enemy units within 3" of it. If both players hold an equal number of objectives the game is a draw.

ALTERNATIVES

This scenario can also be used to game other assaults on built-up city areas:

Prague Uprising: Germans versus Czech partisans

Battle of Berlin: Germans Volkssturm and Hitler Jugend versus Soviets

TOP SECRET

BORGWARD IV DEMOLITION VEHICLE

Whilst the Borgward IV 'Wanze' Panzerschreck carrier was perhaps the most glamorous variant of the SdKfz 301 chassis, the original model designed for demolition duties was by far the most common. Resembling a small tank, the Borgward was driven by a single crewman close to its target. The final approach to the target was conducted using radio control. An 800-pound explosive charge was carried in a container on the sloping front. Drop arms hinged to its front allowed the charge to be lowered to the ground, jettisoned, and the vehicle withdrawn. The charge was detonated by means of a

time fuse or electric detonator. The Borgward was chiefly used to demolish pillboxes and strongpoints. A number were used in Warsaw alongside the more common Goliath remote-controlled demolition device. In one unfortunate incident during the Uprising AK, troops captured a Borgward IV before it had deployed its charge. Not realising this was a demolition vehicle the fighters believed they had captured some form of light tank and drove it back to their headquarters. Whilst being examined it detonated and this enormous detonation killed up to 300 civilians and fighters.

BORGWARD IV

Cost	95 pts (Inexperienced)
Weapons	None
Damage Value	8+ (light tank)
Special Rules	- Demolition: At any point during its move, a Borgward IV may drop its demolition charge represented by a counter. The next time the Borgward is activated the charge can be detonated. Roll a single die: on a 1 the device does not explode, on a roll of 2-6 the charge detonates with effect of HE (6") as half a ton of high explosive detonates.

SCENARIO 6: KUBUS AND THE GREY WOLF

DESCRIPTION

The home-built armoured car Kubus was completed on 22 August and immediately handed over to the 'Krybar' group of the AK. The Krybar had long harboured ambitions on becoming the armoured wing of the uprising having already come into possession of a captured German SdKfz 251 half-track. Nicknamed the Szary Wilk ('Grey Wolf'), the 251 was in good working order and armed with a slightly long in the tooth Hotchkiss machine gun. With the addition of Kubus they were eager to put their forces to good use as soon as possible.

The selected target of the first assault was the main campus of the Warsaw University. This was providing shelter for yet another isolated group of German troops who had been cut off at the start of the uprising. Although the Germans had shown little enthusiasm for advancing beyond their defences their presence was still an annoying distraction to the AK, requiring men desperately needed elsewhere to keep them bottled up.

As a fighting force, the German defenders were hardly formidable comprising of the 'walking wounded' of a Genesungs ('Convalescence') company and members of a Sicherungs ('Security') battalion. The Germans did have the advantage of fighting from behind of some strong walls and a pillbox bunker protected the potentially vulnerable main gate. Previous infantry attacks by AK forces on the gates had been repulsed with the Poles being unable to get close enough to use PIATs and other explosive charges against the bunkers as well-directed German MMG fire kept them at a distance.

The acquisition of Kubus and Szary Wilk opened up new opportunities as the thin armour of the two vehicles could resist machine gun fire and with luck allow the assault teams to get close enough to neutralise the bunkers.

The attack took place at 0400hrs on 23 August with the two vehicles charging down the main street towards the university gate, with bullets ricocheting off their armour. Hunched inside were two units of dedicated AK Kedyw troopers armed with a mix of PIATs, Panzerfausts, flamethrowers and makeshift bombs to deal with the bunkers and gates. Led by the enthusiastic Porucznik Wojciech Brzozowski, the 'Krybar' group were conducting the first Polish armoured assault since September 1939!

OPPOSING FORCES

ARMIA KRAJOWA (AK):

THE KRYBAR ASSAULT TEAM

These forces should be selected from the *Armia Krajowa* Theatre Selector found on page 50 of this book.

Historically it should be composed of AK Kedyw squads led by the veteran First Lieutenant Wojciech Brzozowski. The Polish player should transport two of their AK infantry squads and two PIAT teams in armoured transports.

Ideally this should be the Kubus armoured car and the converted SdKfz 251/1 Szary Wilk. If you do not have a suitable model to represent Kubus then replace it with a second 251 fitted with a forward-mounted flamethrower, which adds +50pts to the normal vehicle cost.

GERMAN ARMY

Group Uhlig

These forces should be selected from the Assault on Warsaw Theatre Selector found on page 51 of this book.

Historically, the German defenders of the university should be mostly composed of Sicherungs squads and Inexperienced unit choices. Like many other locations in Warsaw, the university was garrisoned by second-line troops who never expected to face determined opposition.

The German player should not choose any vehicles and restrict their artillery to a single PaK 36 anti-tank gun. This can be placed already dug-in and may use hidden set-up.

SET-UP

This game is based on 'Scenario 9: Point Defence' from the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 144) with the following modifications:

The German player is the defender. The scenario is best played on a 4' x 4' table.

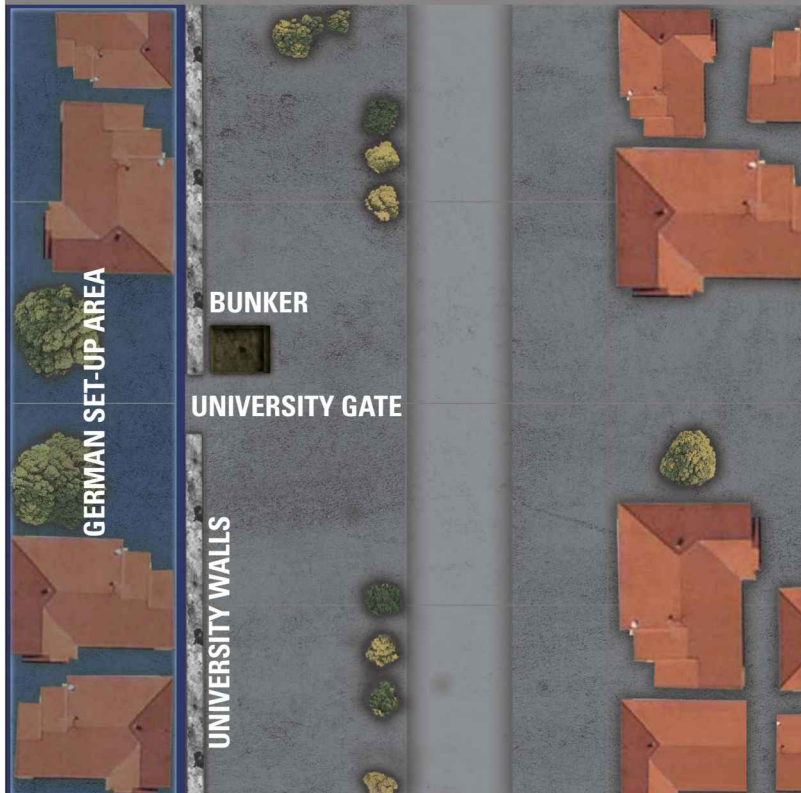
A stone wall (hard cover) should be laid across the table 12" in from the defending player's table edge. This represents the walls of the university. The German player then nominates their three objectives. One will be the university main gate and should be placed at the exact centre of the wall. The other two objectives indicate smaller entrances and should be placed 18" either side of the main gate. A bunker with a free Regular German MMG team should be placed adjacent to the main gate objective. The Germans set up at least half of their units behind the wall. These units can use the hidden set-up rules. Units that are not set up to start with are left in reserve.

The AK units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be their entire army if they wish. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

German troops enter the shattered outskirts of Warsaw



SCENARIO 6: KUBUS AND THE GREY WOLF



To capture the main gate, its bunker must be put out of action either by being destroyed or its occupants killed.

OBJECTIVE

The AK should capture the entrances to the university to allow units following up to seize back this important building.

The Germans must keep the partisans out, and help is not expected.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the AK player must move their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the AK player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Preparatory bombardment

No preparatory bombardment is allowed for either player.

City fighting

Use the city fighting rules which are found on page 145.

Limited supplies

Both the Germans and the AK are running short of ammunition and fuel and are subject to limited supplies (see page 15).

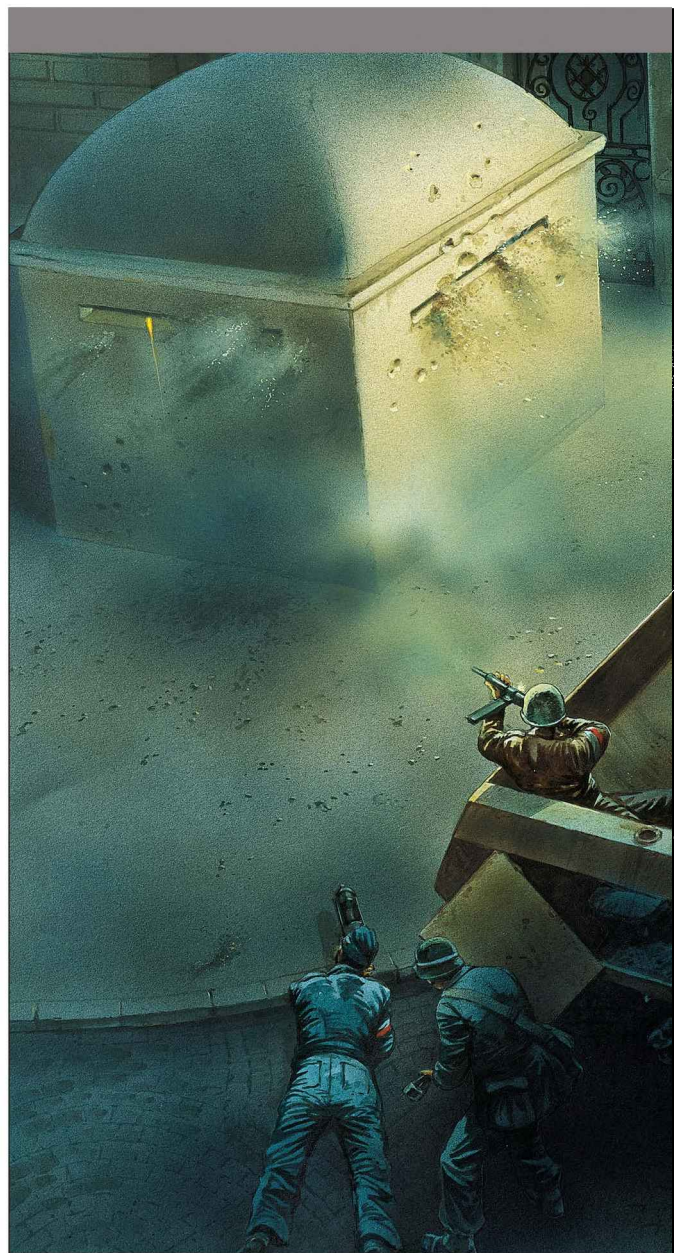
GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game calculate which side has won as follows. If the attacker holds two or three objectives the attacker wins. If the attacker holds one objective the game is a draw. If the attacker holds no objectives then the defender wins. All objectives are held by the defender at the start of the game regardless of where their troops are positioned. If an objective changes hands during the game then it remains under the control of that side until it is taken back. To capture an objective there must be a model from one of your infantry or artillery units (or a transport including one such unit) within 3" of the objective at the end of the turn, and there must be no enemy unit of any type within 3" of it. Once you capture an objective, you hold it until the enemy captures it back.

To capture the main gate, its bunker must be put out of action either by being destroyed or its occupants killed.



AFTERMATH

The AK fighters got close enough to the main gate to engage the bunker with flamethrower and PIAT fire. However, Lieutenant Brzozowski was cut down by machine gun fire and without his stirring leadership the attack began to falter. When the AK became aware of a German 37mm anti-tank gun, the attack was abandoned and both vehicles and the remaining assault force withdrew to lick their wounds. Several other attacks on the university were made using Kubus but none were successful.



ALTERNATIVES

During the early stages of the uprising, a Jagdpanzer (38t) Hetzer was captured. For a time, the AK had hopes of restoring it to working order. Add a Hetzer to the AK force

using the captured vehicle rules on page 55 of this book. The German player may also replace their 37mm anti-tank gun with a 50mm PaK 38. He may also select as an armoured car or tank choice: a captured BA-10 or M14/41 respectively.



German Heer MG42 team

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES



The collapse of the Warsaw uprising did not mean the end of the *Armia Krajowa* (AK). Many of their units had escaped from the city and joined up with other units in the outlying countryside where they continued the fight against the German occupiers. However, many of these units were now operating in areas that the Red Army had overrun and they quickly found that any feelings of fraternal brotherhood between themselves and the advancing Soviet were sadly lacking.

The Soviets were particularly worried that a hostile force was now operating behind the Red Army's frontlines and posed a threat to the tenuous supply lines that fuelled their headlong advance into Germany. Many local commanders of SMERSH (Death to Spies!) detachments were aware that their careers and perhaps lives depended on the Free Polish forces being neutralised or simply wiped out. A large number of NKVD regiments were sent into the countryside on search and destroy missions looking for the elusive AK. In cases when contact was made the odds were usually

in the NKVD's favour as they significantly outnumbered their Polish adversaries. In a small number of skirmishes the AK gave a good account of themselves inflicting severe losses on the Soviets before melting into the woodland and forests. AK units were still engaging Soviet occupation troops as late as 1950!

Although NKVD units had a fearsome reputation, especially those brave individuals who had fought on the frontlines at Stalingrad, many of the new formations following in the wake of the advancing Red Army were of much lower quality with little experience of combat. Their main job was to keep local populations cowed and to round up enemy stragglers. Many though saw their real priority as helping themselves to as much pillaged loot as possible. NKVD vehicles that should have been carrying weapons and other essential equipment were carrying 'liberated' furniture, paintings or even livestock! When they faced determined AK fighters defending their homes, many NKVD units were found wanting.



German Heer
medium mortar team

FIGHTING 'THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES' WITH BOLT ACTION

TERRAIN

Many of the battles fought between the AK and NKVD took place on the rolling farmlands of Western Poland, which is broken up by areas of dense woodland. Buildings were few and widely dispersed and the AK did not favour fighting where the Polish population could be endangered, so only one or two building terrain pieces should be placed on the table. There should, however, be a fair scattering of woodland or forest terrain pieces as these were heavily used by the AK for concealment and shelter.

SCENARIOS GENERAL SCENARIOS

Many of the scenarios in the *Bolt Action* rulebook are eminently suitable for recreating engagements between the AK and the NKVD. The following are especially recommended:

Scenario 2: Meeting Engagement: A surprise encounter between AK forces and an NKVD Search and Destroy unit.

Scenario 5: Top Secret: An AK agent flown from London has parachuted into the wrong landing zone, the AK and

NKVD race to his location to secure this vital asset.

Scenario 6: Demolition: SMERSH have discovered the location of an important AK regional HQ. They must destroy it whilst at the same time protecting their own transport and supplies at their jumping-off point.

Scenario 8: Manhunt: The NKVD know that an important AK regional commander is in the area he must be captured or liquidated – the NKVD are the scenario's attackers.

The modifications noted for an 'Unequal Struggle' on page 14 can be used for any scenario. This would adequately simulate the overwhelming superiority in numbers enjoyed by the NKVD.

SPECIAL RULES FOR THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES SCENARIOS

The following special rules can be incorporated into scenarios set during Operation Bagration to give a unique feel to scenarios set during this period. They are optional and both players must agree to their use.

Preparatory bombardment:

The 'hide and seek' nature of these operations means that no side may conduct a preparatory bombardment.

Hidden set-up:

This is classic asymmetric warfare and AK units familiar with the local terrain should always be allowed to take advantage of hidden set-up.

Air support:

The Soviets often employed many of their numerous air assets in hunting down and destroying AK forces. Only the Soviet player may employ forward air observers.

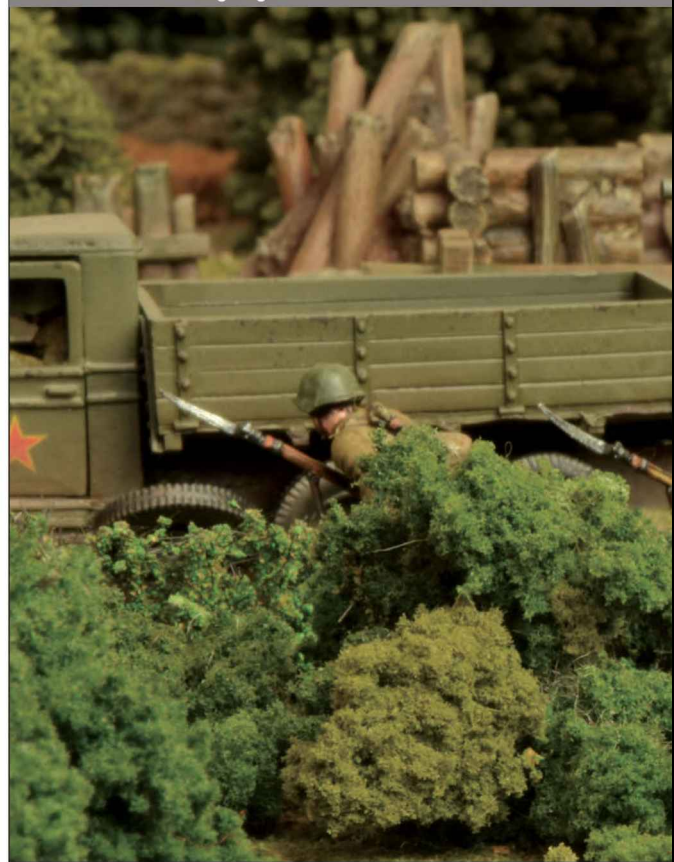
Night fighting:

Many of the engagements between the AK and NKVD were fought at night or in the low visibility conditions of dusk or dawn. It is recommended that players roll on the night fighting scenarios table on page 220 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook.

An unequal struggle:

During the anti-partisan operations the Red Army was able to flood the Polish countryside with security troops, greatly outnumbering its AK opponents. In any Attacker–Defender scenarios where the Soviets/NKVD are the attacking force, we recommend using the special rules for 'An Unequal Struggle', which can be found on page 14 of this book.

Another one for the gulag.



THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES THEATRE SELECTORS

AK/POLISH:

- Armia Krajowa This book page 50

SOVIET:

- NKVD This book page 66
- Operation Bagration *Armies of the Soviet Union*™

ALTERNATIVES

Up to the point the Germans were driven out of Poland, their security forces conducted a savage fight against partisans in the Polish countryside. Any of the scenarios mentioned above can be played with the NKVD forces being replaced by units selected from the German Anti-Partisan Security Patrol theatre selector. (*Armies of Germany* p.90)

NKVD THEATRE SELECTOR

The Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh ('The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs' or NKVD) was formed

in 1934 and fulfilled a role as the public police force of the USSR and guardians of the borders of the Rodina. They also infamously ran the Gulag forced labour camps whose inmates included political prisoners and many officers of the Soviet armed forces who had been purged for alleged disloyalty. Many of these were released after the Great Patriotic War began and often held a fear or hatred of this organisation which made cooperation between the regular armed forces and the NKVD very strained if not openly hostile.

In this campaign book we are primarily representing the NKVD in their role as second echelon units tasked to police the occupied territories captured by the Red Army during 1944 and 1945. It came as something of a shock to these units in Poland and Byelorussia when they came up against well-organised and determined partisans who had quickly switched from fighting the now-departed Germans to opposing the new invader.



Although NKVD troops and officers commanded respect from the ordinary Soviet soldier, the NKVD was not well versed in actual frontline combat and did not perform terribly well when fighting partisans or running into better-organised groups of German stragglers. The reinforced platoon below is not well equipped to fight a properly trained and equipped enemy frontline force but it is a good match for Bolt Action battles with partisan forces such as the Polish Armia Krajowa.

A Soviet force for the NKVD must comprise one or more reinforced platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each reinforced platoon is made up as follows.

Reinforced Platoon

- 1 Lieutenant (Junior or Senior)
- 2 Infantry squads: SMERSH squad, NKVD squad, Second Line NKVD squad, Scout squad

plus:

Headquarters

- 0-1 Captain or Major
- 0-1 Medic



Infantry

- 0-3 Infantry squads: NKVD squad, Second Line NKVD squad
- 0-1 Machine gun team
- 0-1 Sniper team
- 0-1 Mortar team: Light, medium

Artillery

- 0-2 gun from:
- Anti-tank gun: 45mm Model 1937
- Artillery gun: Light

Armoured cars

- 0-1 Armoured car from: BA-64, BA-64B, BA-64Dshk

Tank, Tank destroyer, Assault gun, Self-propelled artillery and Anti-aircraft vehicle

- 0-1 T-60, T-34, SU-76, Tokarev 4M Quad Maxim

Transport and Tows

- 0-1 Transports per infantry unit in the reinforced platoon
- 0-1 Tow: Truck

NKVD ADDITIONAL UNITS

INFANTRY SQUADS AND TEAMS

SMERSH SQUADS

These were potentially the best units associated with the NKVD. The SMERSH ('Death to Spies') organisation was formed in 1943 to closely monitor the mood and activities of the Soviet military personnel and civilians to root out any anti-Soviet sentiment and resistance. Whilst they famously often worked undercover to detect unauthorised retreats by Red Army units and counter desertions by individual

soldiers, they also fielded specialist security detachments to assist or 'encourage' other NKVD forces in their search and destroy missions against partisans in occupied areas who resisted the assimilation of their homelands into the Soviet sphere. These SMERSH security units were highly trained in both ranged and hand-to-hand combat and expected to eliminate their targets quickly and efficiently.

Cost	80pts (Veteran Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 6 men with rifles at +16pts each - Any soldiers may have a submachine gun instead of a rifle for +2pts each - 1 soldier may have an LMG for +20pts – another man becomes loader
Special Rules	- Tough fighters: Many SMERSH operatives were recruited from the GRU (Glavnoye razvedyvatel'noye upravleniye – 'Main Intelligence Directorate') and were highly trained in hand-to-hand combat, being expected to kill or capture a skilled and fit opponent. SMERSH units have the tough fighters unit special rule. - Not one step back: The members of a SMERSH squad have the training and zeal of a commissar and manned many of the 'barrier squads' that infamously prevented Soviet soldiers from retreating, often with the use of gunfire. Any unit within 6" of a SMERSH squad is subject to the 'Not one step back' rule found in the Armies of the Soviet Union book.

SECOND LINE NKVD SQUAD

These represent the rank and file NKVD units that followed the Red Army as it advanced into Poland and Germany.

Although its main mission was to police the occupied territories, it spent a great deal of its time engaged in looting and plundering of civilian homes and farms. Many units were given a quota by its officers to secure items that could be shipped home to the Soviet Union and sold for profit the lion's share going to those officers. This created a great deal of resentment from the frontline troops who despised these 'thieving shirkers' and helped encourage

their own looting. However, several hostile contacts with Polish partisans and 'roving cauldrons' of German stragglers tested these units to the limit, prompting several NKVD commanders to desperately request additional reinforcements from their commander in Moscow – the much-feared Lavrentiy Beria.

However, like their predecessors in Stalingrad, some of these units passed the test of fire and performed well. For that reason, we class Second Line NKVD squads as Green.

Cost	Inexperienced Infantry (35pts)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 6 additional men with rifles for +7pts each - Any soldiers may have a submachine gun instead of a rifle for +3pts each - 1 soldier may have an LMG for +20pts – another man becomes loader - Second Line NKVD squads can be fanatics at +3pts per man (see page 90 in the <i>Bolt Action</i> rulebook)
Special Rules	- Green

CLEARING THE FLANKS





THE SOUTH

After the destruction of Army Group Centre, the Soviet forces arrayed against the Balkans began preparation to deliver a decisive knockout blow to Germany's satellite allies: Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary. STAVKA believed that the governments of all three countries were ripe for a collapse that could be hastened by a large-scale offensive. Of particular interest were the Rumanian oil fields around Ploesti, which provided the Third Reich with the majority of its fuel and rubber.

On 20 August 1944, the Soviets began the Iasi-Kishinev offensive spearheaded by the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts commanded by Generals Malinovsky and Tolbukhin respectively. These comprised 1.3 million men and nearly 2,000 armoured vehicles. Unlike their northern comrades, these troops were largely inexperienced and badly equipped. Opposing them were a million Axis troops with 300 armoured vehicles; up to 50% of this force were Rumanians unlikely to be up for the fight. Both Ukrainian fronts would mount a coordinated thrust into the Iasi-Kishinev region whilst other Soviet forces mounted diversionary attacks on the flanks to prevent the Germans moving their reserves to repulse the main attack.

Whilst the attack to the South met unexpectedly stiff resistance from two German infantry divisions, which held up the Soviets for two days, the northern attack was a splendid success due to the almost complete evaporation of the Rumanian forces, leaving their German allies completely exposed. Within 24 hours, Soviet tank units were arrowing

towards the Rumanian capital, Bucharest. On 23 August, the Rumanian king ended the 1940 Treaty of Vienna. Hitler ordered German aircraft to bomb Bucharest, provoking a Rumanian declaration of war on Germany. Isolated German formations fought skilful delaying actions to allow as many forces to escape as possible but four corps of the German 6th Army became trapped and tried to break out to the west. On the verge of escape, they were brought to battle and destroyed on the banks of the Siret River. By 2 September, the Soviets were in possession of both Bucharest and the vital oilfields.

Axis losses were close to half a million men whilst the Soviets lost 67,000. The Red Army was now moving into both Bulgaria and Hungary. By the end of September, the Bulgarian government became the next country to change sides and its armies began to support Soviet operations. However, as the Soviets moved further into Hungary they met stiffening German resistance whilst also feeling the effects of overextension and long supply lines. Rather than being stuck in inflexible defensive lines, newly arriving German reinforcements found themselves with the freedom and mobility to counter-attack against Russian advances. This resulted in near encirclements of several Red Army formations, which sucked the momentum out of the offensive. By December, the Soviets were on the outskirts of Budapest and had virtually surrounded the city, yet German resistance prevented its fall to the Red Army. Similar thrusts into Slovakia also encountered strong German counter-attacks and momentum was lost.

THE NORTH

As a direct result of Bagration the Soviets had managed to drive a wedge between the virtually destroyed Army Group Centre and Army Group North and had also briefly reached the Baltic coast by mid-August. This threatened to completely cut off the northern army in the Baltic States, but a German counter-attack – Operation Doppelkopf – supported by the guns of the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen, forced the Soviets back and restored communications between the two army groups.

However, Army Group North had been seriously reduced by the continuous fighting of July and August and with the redeployment of some of its best units to Byelorussia had become a ghost of its former self. STAVKA sensed the weakness and in September redirected all three Baltic Fronts against the wounded formation, outnumbering it 3:1. The result was inevitable and collapse began. However, where Army Groups in the South and Centre had completely collapsed, Army Group North – under the skilful direction of General Schorner – managed a fighting withdrawal, falling back on the impressive defences of Riga.

Any chance of keeping an overland corridor open back to the Reich receded with further Soviet offensives reaching the coast to the south and the remains of the entire Army Group was pulled back into the Courland Peninsula. This force of over 200,000 men, including two panzer divisions, would tie up six Soviet field armies in a savage battle of attrition for the next seven months before surrendering virtually intact in May 1945.

DUEL IN FINLAND

The final actions in the north involved an offensive by Soviet troops against the last German defenders remaining in Finland. Centred on the port of Petsamo the troops of the 20th Mountain Army were skilled in Arctic warfare but now found themselves confronting a Soviet force also specially trained to fight in the frozen wilderness. The most prominent were the Red Army's 126th and 127th Light Rifle Corps, boasting over 4,000 ski troops able to exploit any breaches in the German defences. The majority of supplies were carried by horse and reindeer, whilst a number of American lend-lease amphibious transports were included to aid river crossings.

The initial attacks began on 7 October, but Soviet artillery and air support was hampered by bad weather, allowing the Germans to withdraw across the River Titovka towards Petsamo. Unlike the offensives in the south, the weather and terrain turned this into a battle of light infantry forces in terrain totally unsuitable for armoured vehicles. Soviet naval troops outflanked the Petsamo defences through a series of bold amphibious landings forcing a rapid retreat from the city towards the Norwegian border. Awaiting them were roadblocks thrown up by two Soviet light ski corps who had moved rapidly cross country behind enemy lines. Unfortunately, their advance had been so rapid that they had outrun their supplies and were not at full strength when the veteran German mountain troops smashed into their roadblocks. Despite a desperate defence, the Germans were able to break through and escape into Norway.

Gebirgsjäger light machine gunners rain hot lead on the advancing Soviet infantry.



SCENARIO 7: BREAKOUT FROM PETSAMO

DESCRIPTION

With Soviet forces attempting to bottle up the main body of the German 20th Mountain Army around the city of Petsamo, its commander, General Jodl, realised that his forces must break out to the west along the Tarnet Road towards the relative safety of Norway. Fortunately for the Germans, heavy units of the Red Army had not yet closed the noose and they were able to withdraw along the road. However, elements of the Soviet 126th and 127th Light Rifle Corps had managed to set up some roadblocks in an attempt to delay or trap the retreating Germans. This scenario portrays an attempt by German Gebirgsjäger units to break through Soviet roadblocks. Both forces are travelling light and have no access to armour or heavy weapons.

OPPOSING FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

The Soviet forces representing the 126th and 127th Light Rifle Corps should be selected from the Operation Bagration Theatre Selector found in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book with the following caveats:

No HMG teams.

Light mortars only.

Artillery should be restricted to a Light howitzers (mountain gun) and/or 45mm Model 1937 anti-tank gun.

No Armoured cars or Tanks, Tank destroyers, Self-propelled artillery or Anti-aircraft vehicles.

No Transports and Tows other than Horse-drawn limbers.

HORSE/REINDEER DRAWN LIMBER

The 126th and 127th LRC had force-marched their way across very rough ground to reach the Tarnet Road with their equipment and guns carried on, or pulled by, horse or reindeer pack animals.

Cost	8pts (Inexperienced), 10pts (Regular), 12pts (Veteran)
Weapons	None
Damage Value	3+ (literally soft-skinned)
Tow	- Any gun or howitzer
Special Rules	- Slow

GERMAN ARMY

The German forces represent elements of 2nd, 6th and 7th Mountain Divisions. These troops were travelling light and had commandeered motorised transport where possible. Troops should be selected from the 1944 – Defence of the East Theatre Selector in the *Armies of Germany* book with the following caveats:

Infantry should be composed of Gebirgsjäger (late war) squads.

Light or medium mortars only.

Artillery should be restricted to a Light howitzer (mountain gun).

No Armoured cars or Tanks, Tank destroyers, Self-propelled artillery or Anti-aircraft vehicles.

Transports and Tows. These should be restricted to a Kubelwagen, Heavy field car or Truck.

SET-UP

This game is based on ‘Scenario 7: Envelopment’ from the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 140). The Germans will be the attackers.

The Soviet player picks a side of the table and sets up at least half of their units in the set-up area. These units may use the hidden set-up rules (see page 131). They may also start the game dug in. Rules for dug-in units can be found on page 139 of this book. Units that are not set up to start with are left in reserve (see page 132).

The German player’s units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The German player must nominate at least half of their force to form their first wave. This can be their entire army if they wish. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve. Reserves are not allowed to outflank in this scenario.

The table should be set up with a 6” road running vertically down the table to represent the Tarnet Road. An improvised roadblock should be set up on the road in the defender’s set-up area. This should be a 6” linear piece of terrain which, in game terms, will be classed as an obstacle and also provide hard cover for any troops defending it. This battle was fought over some very inhospitable terrain in early winter. All terrain other than roads should be classed as rough terrain. The table should have a number of dense woodland terrain pieces to break up lines of sight, and marsh to represent impassable terrain.

SCENARIO 7: BREAKOUT FROM PETSAMO

SOVIET SET-UP AREA

GERMAN DEPLOYMENT EDGE

German Gebirgsjäger advance on a Soviet road block.



CLEARING THE FLANKS

OBJECTIVE

The German player must break through the Soviet defences. If held up, fast-moving Soviet troops will catch up with the fleeing forces and destroy them.

The Soviets must hold up the German units as long as possible – they cannot be allowed to escape into Norway.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the German player must move their entire first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the German player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Preparatory bombardment

Neither player is allowed to use a preparatory preliminary bombardment.

Fog

During the Petsamo campaign both sides were impeded by extended periods of foggy weather, which reduced visibility in combat and hindered air support. Before the start of each turn, the Soviet player rolls one die. If a 4, 5 or 6 is rolled then the night fighting/reduced visibility rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook are applied. The reduced visibility representing swirls of thick fog rather than night conditions. Ignore rules for muzzle flashes and flares.

Air Support

Both Luftwaffe and Red Army Air Force air strikes are available. However, neither player may use a forward air

observer to call in an air strike on a turn when reduced visibility conditions are in effect.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least two more victory points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and honours are shared and a draw is declared. The German player scores one victory point for every enemy unit destroyed and two victory points for each of their own units that is inside the Soviet player's set-up area (even if only partially), and three victory points for each German unit that has moved off the enemy table edge before the end of the game. The Soviet player scores two victory points for every German unit destroyed.

AFTERMATH

After a period of fierce skirmishing, a large number of Gebirgsjäger units were able to break through the thin defence lines of the Red Army light infantry but were forced to abandon the majority of their vehicles and artillery as they moved through the enemy lines avoiding Soviet air attacks. The majority of these units remained in Norway until they surrendered to the British in 1945.

A German column moves out



THE VISTULA-ODER OFFENSIVE



As early as October 1944, the Soviet High Command – the STAVKA – was starting to plan in detail how to bring the war against Germany to a victorious conclusion. The aims of clearing German troops from Soviet territory had been achieved by the end of 1944 in the aftermath of the successful Operation Bagration and follow-up offensives in the Ukraine and the Baltic States. The one kilometre-wide Vistula River running through Poland and into the Baltic provided a formidable natural defence that could have been exploited by the German defenders but three well-established Soviet bridgeheads lay on the western side of the river. The Sandomierz bridgehead – the largest – allowed almost 90% of Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front to be deployed, whilst the smaller Pilawy and Magnuszew bridgeheads were jumping off points for Zhukov's 1st Byelorussian Front.

THE EAST–WEST DILEMMA

German strategists faced a major dilemma on how best to defend the Reich from the Red Army in the East and the Western Allies advancing out of France and moving up through Italy. The German position was precarious and any strategic mistake would prove fatal. Colonel-General Heinz Guderian pointed at the latest intelligence estimates that indicated significant Soviet builds ups that heralded a resumption of offensive operations in January. Hitler had other ideas. Despite the disasters in the East his eyes were firmly on the West where he believed a major offensive through the Ardennes could deliver a defeat to the Western Allies, splitting the British and American armies and seizing Antwerp. This he believed would delay further Allied offensive and perhaps bring them to the negotiating table. He could then turn eastwards to defeat the Bolshevik hordes. Despite protests, the already weak Eastern Front was stripped of men and material to bolster the offensives in the West, including the powerful mobile reserve of the 6th SS Panzer Army which included the infamous Kampfgruppe Peiper.

The attack, beginning on the 16 December, initially made significant inroads into the American positions in the Ardennes as the cream of the German armed forces penetrated as far as the Meuse River. However, by 23 December the skies were clearing and the deadly 'Jabos' of the Allied air forces began pummelling the forward German units and their supply lines. Advances ground to halt as American armoured forces began to threaten the flanks. On 8 January 1945, Hitler authorised withdrawals and the Germans began to retreat.

Throughout this time, Guderian continued to petition Hitler for more forces to hold the Vistula line, but he was ignored. The leadership were convinced that the Bolshevik hordes were spent and another Red Army offensive



unlikely. Guderian continued to plead that his forces were outnumbered 3:1 and would have been even more concerned if he'd known the true odds were closer to 5:1.

Maskirovka – the Soviet practice of subterfuge and deception – came into play again. To prepare for the assault from the three bridgeheads it was necessary to convince the Germans that the offensive was more likely to be initiated further south. Leaked radio traffic and rumours deliberately spread amongst civilians helped to reinforce this impression.

The Germans were misled and failed to spot the movement of no less than nine armies and a tank corps into the bridgehead areas. Konev and Zhukov between



them were able to field no less than 163 divisions, 4,500 tanks, 2,500 assault guns, 14,000 artillery pieces, 5,000 anti-tank guns, 2,000 Katyushas, 5,000 tactical aircraft and 2.2 million troops. It is doubtful that many military forces in history were as well prepared as those army groups prior to the start of the Vistula-Oder offensive.

KONEV'S 1ST UKRAINIAN FRONT

Konev's ten armies of the 1st Ukrainian Front struck on the night of 11 January, under a blanket of fog and blizzards. The sky was lit up for over 90 minutes as the devastating weight of the Soviet artillery fell on the German defences.

The entire HQ of the 4th Panzer Army was obliterated along with nearly a quarter of the army's personnel. German troops started streaming back from the front their units disintegrating – many showing signs of sheer panic. Major Soviet infantry assaults followed, exploiting gaps of good ground that had been spared the intense barrage. Working in close cooperation with tanks and assault guns, these attacks cleared what was left of the shattered German infantry in the forward areas. By early afternoon, Konev was able to unleash his 2,000 tanks into the fray, which sliced through the shattered defences and within three hours had advanced 20 kilometres. So rapid was this advance that it brought them into contact with the panzer

army's reserves, the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions. Rather than being a mobile reserve able to best counter a Soviet breakthrough, these forces had been pinned in place by Hitler's 'No retreat' order and found themselves directly engaged by advancing Red Army tank units. Despite losses these units, under the command of General Nehring, were able to withdraw to the northwest. The unopposed Soviet tank formations burst through the German rear areas and in some places advanced up to 40 kilometres as 4th Panzer Army literally ceased to exist.

ZHUKOV'S 1ST BYELORUSSIAN FRONT

Two days later, Zhukov unleashed his forces from the smaller Pilawy and Magnuszew bridgeheads against the German 9th Army. Again the attacks were preceded by an enormous artillery barrage followed by combined arms assaults on the forward defences. Engineers and mine-clearing tanks lead the way, opening up a route through the forward trenches. The German mobile reserves had better warning and were free to respond. However, their impact was weakened as they were used against multiple threats rather than being focussed against one thrust. Soviet units found themselves opposed by multiple counter-attacks along their route of advance by German tanks and panzer grenadiers, but never in enough force to halt their momentum. The rifle divisions kept chewing their way through the defences until the German rear positions were breached, at which point the tank forces were unleashed. The results for Zhukov were very similar to those of Konev, and his forces broke through the last German defences advancing as much as 50 kilometres, racing to the Pileca River in an attempt to stop the Germans using this as a new defensive line. Whilst the infantry managed to cross the iced over river, it was too thin for the tanks, many of which disappeared into a frigid watery grave. Fortunately, the engineers found a ford and after they blasted the ice away, tanks and assault guns were able to cross (although many became bogged down or engulfed by the freezing water). A bridgehead was secured and after the emplacement of several large tank-bearing bridges the armoured exploitation forces poured across into open country. By the end of 15 January, the two fronts had smashed their way through the German defences and were linking up across a 500-kilometre frontage after an advance of up to 100 kilometres.

GERMAN COUNTERMOVES

As the first reports of the massive Soviet offensive reached the German leadership, no one could doubt that this was a critical moment that would require careful consideration. However, after months of little interest in



the Eastern Front, Hitler's knee jerk reaction to Konev's initial attacks damaged the German cause. He ordered two divisions of the powerful Grossdeutschland Panzerkorps south to assist the collapsing 4th Panzer Army. Unfortunately, in moving south, the two divisions were flanked by Zhukov's attack which had started after Konev's. To avoid being destroyed whilst still entrained, both formations had to rapidly disembark at Lodz. Unable to mount an effective counter, they formed a defensive perimeter around Lodz to allow the crumbling elements of the 9th Army to pass through. Once this task was completed the formations themselves headed southwest to avoid being encircled and much-needed heavy equipment had to be abandoned. With no intact German reserves available, the Soviets were free to commence the second stage of the offensive. With the defences on the Vistula breached, the exploitation phase could begin with an advance to the Oder and the very gates of Berlin itself.



EXPLOITATION TO THE ODER

By 16 January, the Soviet offensive had met all of its initial objectives earlier than expected and, sensing a German collapse, STAVKA ordered Konev and Zhukov to accelerate their advance towards the strategic cities of Breslau and Posen. Red Army forces were advancing at rates that matched those of the Germans in 1941 and 1942. The rifle divisions were covering 25 kilometres a day whilst the tank formations were advancing as much as 70 kilometres. German formations were simply overrun or bypassed and river crossings were totally undefended and easily secured.

The fortress city of Krakow was taken, opening the gateway to something far more valuable – the Upper Silesian industrial region. This powerhouse of the German war industry produced 95 million tons of coal and 2.5 million tons of steel a year. With the loss of much heavy industry in the west in the Saar and the constant reduction by bombing, the Upper Silesian region had become increasingly important.

Although only seven weak German divisions defended the region, Konev wanted to avoid delays and it was also clear that Stalin wanted it captured largely intact.

Applying excellent tactics, Konev enveloped the region from three sides, threatening the Germans with envelopment. However, before closing the encirclement, he mounted a major attack from the east. As Soviet pressure mounted, the commander of Army Group A, General Schorner, gave orders for a general retreat. Only the fact that Schorner was a favourite of Hitler saved him from severe censure.

By the morning of 28 January, the Germans had retreated and Konev gained the Upper Silesian region for Stalin in a virtually bloodless operation. During these operations the Red Army also came into the possession of the hell that was the Auschwitz concentration camp and many Soviet soldiers were again starkly reminded of why they were fighting.



In most cases there was little to stop the Soviet advance, as 'green' reserve units were thrown in the path of the experienced Red Army tank units. Ahead lay the Oder River, the last major physical barrier on the Eastern Front. By 23 January, two bridgeheads had been forced across the Oder at Ohlau and Steinau.

In the north, Zhukov's 1st Byelorussian Front was also exploiting its victory over the 9th Army. One of Zhukov's key targets was Warsaw – a city reduced to ruins by the vengeful Germans after the recent uprising by the Polish Home Army. Soviet armies encircled the city with the majority of German units fleeing rather than obeying Hitler's orders to fight to the death. When the Soviets entered the city they found it silent and completely devastated, shocking even the hardened Red Army veterans.

A second exploitation thrust was to the south, towards the cities of Lodz and Posen. Lodz was expected to be heavily defended yet the Red Army met little or no resistance being instead met by cheering Polish civilians. Posen proved to be a different proposition, being defended by over 60,000 troops – many of them Volkssturm units comprising of old men and boys. The city still contained a large population of ethnic Germans who had been forbidden to escape by the SS and now faced the wrath of the Soviets and vengeful Poles.

After a number of probing attacks by a tank-heavy force were repulsed, Zhukov decided to isolate and bypass the place, continue west and let the follow-up infantry formations reduce the city. Posen would hold out for another month.

For a short while STAVKA considered ordering both Konev and Zhukov to drive on to Berlin with the aim of capturing it by mid-February. However, fears that Zhukov's right flank might be exposed gave pause to these plans. German defences were also beginning to stiffen and Posen, Breslau and Kustrin were still in their hands – even the confident Soviets, flushed by the success of over a year of headlong advance against the enemy, saw the danger of over-extension. On 2 February, STAVKA formally declared the end of the Vistula-Oder offensive.

The Soviets had achieved a massive victory, destroyed two German armies, captured the Upper Silesian industrial region, and taken several bridgeheads on the western side of the Oder. For the Germans the impact was shattering. In just 22 awful days the frontline had moved from central Poland to a point only 70 kilometres from Berlin. Even the most fanatical of Hitler's supporters now realised that the defeat of the Third Reich was in sight.



FIGHTING THE VISTULA-ODER OFFENSIVE WITH BOLT ACTION

The Vistula-Oder offensive was in many ways a repeat of Operation Bagration but this time fought under savage winter conditions. The Red Army, blessed with seemingly inexhaustible supplies of men, tanks and guns could throw additional resources to overrun any determined pockets of German resistance. However, it would be unfair to the Red Army to fail to point out that by 1945 the Soviet infantryman was on a par with and in many cases superior to his German opposite number. The Soviets had received many hard lessons in the past three years and were now consistently employing particularly effective combined arms tactics. An increasing number of highly competent Red Army officers were coming through the ranks and showing admirable levels of initiative. This was very much at odds with the German experience, which had seen the quality of German forces continuing to diminish with more second line and reserve units being thrown into the battle along with the combat debut of the German 'Home Guard' – the Volkssturm. Poorly trained and inexperienced troops made up the numbers in many German frontline formations. The officer corps could simply not keep up with the awful attrition rates of junior leaders and many formations relied on the experience and wiles of their veteran NCOs and grenadiers to survive. But now, as they were forced back into Germany itself and began fighting

for their homes and loved ones, desperation and fanaticism in equal measures stiffened the resolve of many. Their Red Army enemies were under no illusions, victory might be certain but it would not come cheaply.

TERRAIN

The Vistula-Oder was the last great Soviet winter offensive on the Eastern Front. Its battlefields in Western Poland and the eastern portions of Germany featured large expanses of rolling farmland punctuated by villages, towns and patches of dense woodland and forest. Paved all-weather roads were much more common and less prone to being blocked by snow or mud. Early battles of the offensive should be fought under snow and ice conditions with even major waterways partially or totally frozen. As the offensive ended, an early thaw caused the ground to become wet and easily churned up into mud by the duelling armies.

GENERAL SCENARIOS

All of the scenarios in the Bolt Action book are suitable for the Vistula-Oder offensive, but the following scenarios are particularly applicable:

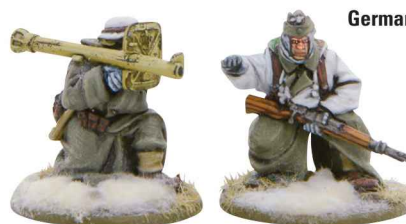
Scenario 3: Key Positions: In order to continue their headlong charge into Western Poland, Soviet armoured

A panzer crew bails out of their stricken Panther tank



exploitation formations needed to capture bridges and vital road junctions. Many of these features were deep behind the collapsing frontline and were often unguarded. Realising their vulnerability the Germans would create ad-hoc battlegroups as 'fire brigades'. Formations would be ordered to secure the objectives before the Red Army. Sometimes both forces arrived at the same time and a desperate battle of possession would begin.

Scenario 7: Envelopment: During the early stages of the offensive large numbers of German units found themselves bypassed by fast-moving Soviet armour formations. Stranded deep behind the enemy frontlines many of these units would disintegrate, but a few well-led examples tried



German Panzerschreck team

to fight their way back to friendly territory. Often close to their goal, they would face a final battle with an enemy formation blocking their way. Now it was their turn to attack and smash their way through Soviet defences.

Achtung, Jabo! A German Wirbelwind shoots down a marauding Soviet aircraft



Scenario 10: Surrounded: 'We are surrounded, there is no escape.' An isolated German force decides to sell itself dearly rather than fall into the hands of the Soviets and suffer the hospitality of a Siberian Gulag.

VISTULA-ODER SCENARIOS

The following three scenarios are designed to reflect various incidents and situations that occurred during the Vistula-Oder offensive:

Scenario 8: The 'Ivans' are Coming

Scenario 9: Race to the Pileca River

Scenario 10: An Unexpected Encounter



SPECIAL RULES FOR SCENARIOS

These following rules intended to help represent the environment of the Vistula-Oder offensive are optional and both players must agree to their use.

Preparatory bombardment

During the early stages of the Vistula-Oder offensive the artillery, the Soviet's 'Red God of War' crashed down on German defenders leaving them stunned or broken and easy targets for the Red Army's combined arms formations. The Soviet player may always add +1 to his die roll for preparatory bombardments.

Air support

The Red Army Air Force maintained almost complete air superiority over the Vistula-Oder battlefields. IL-2 Sturmovik and PE-2 attack aircraft regularly harassed the German forces. If the Soviet player calls in an air strike with a forward air observer, add +1 to the die roll when determining the nature of the air attack on the warplane type chart in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 86).

Minefields

The frontline German defences were often protected by extensive minefields. In Attacker-Defender scenarios the German player may place two free minefield sections (see page 141).

'General Winter'

The Vistula-Oder offensive continued the trend of Soviet winter assaults with the Red Army war machine seemingly comfortable in cold hostile conditions. Not only did the exhausted Germans have to contend with hordes of determined Soviet infantry and tanks but also the tender mercies of 'General Winter'. For Vistula-Oder scenarios, the special rules for snow, ice and frostbite should be used. As some German formations were notoriously lacking in decent winter clothing, at the beginning of any scenario the German player should roll a die. If the roll is 5 or 6, all German units must test for frostbite (see page 137).

Mud

The early spring thaw helped bring the Vistula-Oder offensive to a close. The players can decide not to apply the 'General Winter' special rule and may choose to play the game in mud conditions. Areas of the table should be clearly marked as mud and any vehicle/artillery moving across it should roll for effect on the deep mud table (page 137).

Soviet light mortar team



An unequal struggle

During the Vistula-Oder offensive, the Red Army was able to concentrate its forces and greatly outnumber its Axis opponents in the majority of its attacks. If you want to simulate this situation in any Attacker–Defender scenarios where the Soviets are the attacking force, we recommend using the special rules for ‘An Unequal Struggle’ (page 14).

VISTULA-ODER OFFENSIVE THEATRE SELECTORS

AXIS:

- 1944 – Defence of the East *Armies of Germany*
- Forlorn Hope This book page 16
- Schwere Panzerabteilungen This book page 19

SOVIET:

- Vistula-Oder *Armies of the Soviet Union*

Heroes of the Soviet Union:

Captain Georgi Nikitovich Gubkin

On 17 August 1944, the name of Captain Georgi Gubkin became famous when a battalion he commanded became the first Soviet troops to enter the Reich when they crossed the East Prussian border. Such was the propaganda magnitude of this exploit that he was given a special citation by the United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Gubkin himself had already gained recognition within the Soviet Army for his exploits at the Battle of Kursk. At a crucial juncture, his unit had been part of the last line of defence protecting some of the forward artillery units from an aggressive German advance. Directing the company anti-tank guns, he had managed to help stop most of the advancing tanks before his platoon found themselves in vicious hand-to-hand fighting with German grenadiers.

A surviving German Panther charged forward, threatening to overrun his unit and create a breakthrough to the guns. Armed with an anti-tank grenade, he threw

himself down in front the tank and let it rumble over him. Despite nearly being crushed by the churning tracks the vehicle passed over him and he was now behind it. Gathering his wits, he lobbed the grenade onto the vulnerable engine decking and the resulting explosion disabled the Panther and saved the guns. For this extreme act of valour he was made a Hero of the Soviet Union and promoted to captain.

His most infamous action was taking part in a western gunfight-style shootout with a disgruntled Luftwaffe officer. The German airman, upset at being made an infantryman after his staffel (squadron) had lost all its aircraft, challenged the ‘famous Gubkin’ to a duel. Gubkin was already well known to the German forces directly facing him due to Soviet propaganda that celebrated him as one of the first Red Army soldiers to cross the border of the Reich into East Prussia. Gubkin immediately accepted the challenge and during a lull in the general fighting a shootout occurred in a pre-selected stretch of ‘no man’s land’. Unsurprisingly, the skilled Gubkin gunned down his opponent to the cheers and groans of the soldiers of both sides who were watching the spectacle. The hapless German was then unceremoniously dragged off the field by the victor and interrogated for his troubles.

Gubkin continued to lead his unit forward into Germany until seriously wounded at Königsberg in February 1945. He survived the war, eventually marrying the nurse who had tended to his injuries.

Cost	150pts (Veteran HQ unit)
Composition	1 officer (Captain) and up to 2 further men
Weapons	Pistol
Options	The officer may be accompanied by up to 2 Veterans armed with SMGs for +13pts per man
Special Rules	- Any infantry unit within 12" of Gubkin count as tank hunters when testing morale for assaulting or being assaulted by enemy armoured vehicles. Any successful roll for hit and damage with Gubkin's pistol counts as an automatic exceptional damage result (just as if he had rolled a 6 for damage).

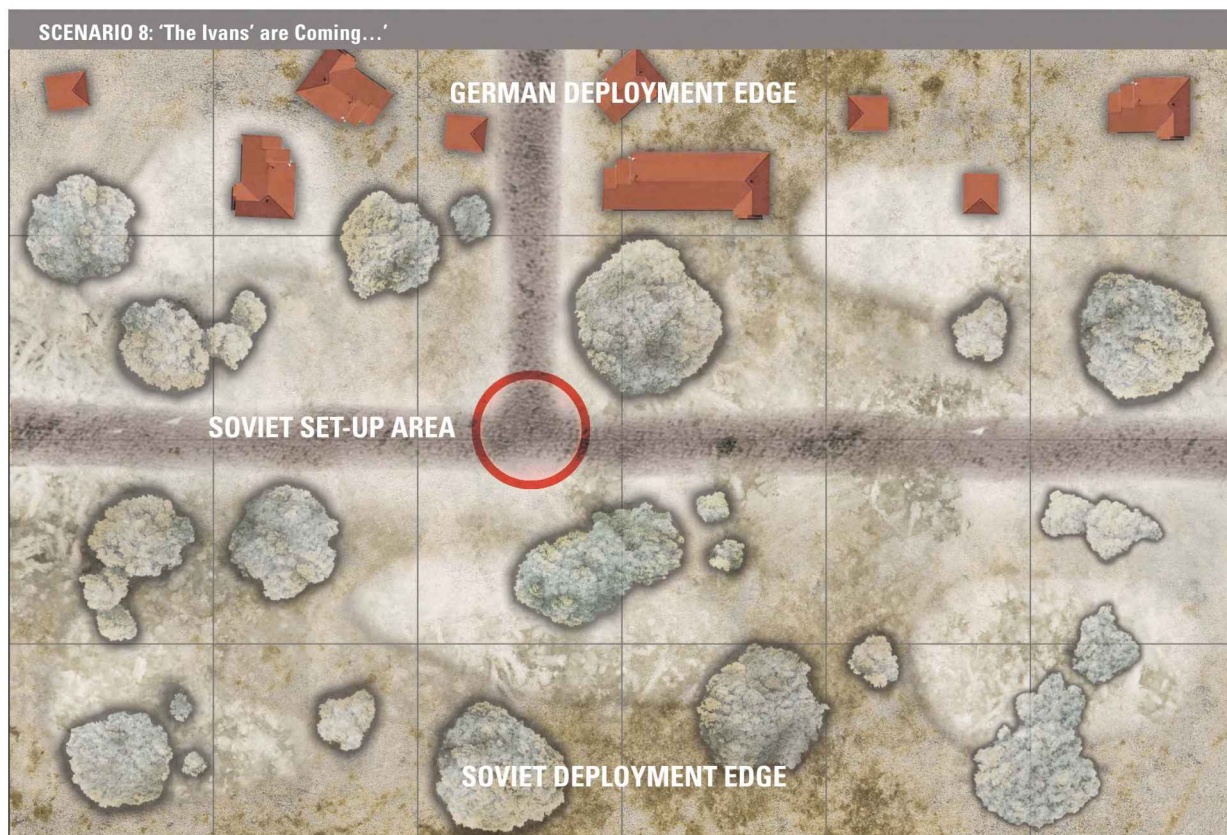
SCENARIO 8: 'THE IVANS' ARE COMING...'

DESCRIPTION

The rapid advances of the Red Army during the Vistula-Oder offensive threw German defences into disarray as whole units crumbled or were destroyed. Vanguard Soviet units could find themselves many hundreds of kilometres behind German lines having left the main body of their parent formation far behind. Occasionally these units would find themselves in possession of a strategic position and a decision would be taken to hold in place until other friendly forces caught up with them. There was the very strong possibility that the vanguard unit could in the meantime come into contact with enemy forces. These could be newly mobilised German units moving up to the front, rag-tag formations in retreat or even locally raised defenders. In this particular scenario, a BA-10 armoured car and a truckload of infantry from a Soviet reconnaissance unit has secured a vital crossroads just outside a large Polish village. Local ethnic Germans who have been organised into a militia are harangued by the local SS Gauleiter to show true National Socialist verve and teach

the Bolshevik invader a lesson. Additionally, a unit of raw replacement troops recently arrived from Germany now find themselves about to be thrown into the fray. To make matters worse heavy snow begins to fall from the leaden skies reducing visibility. The Soviet commander, aware that other units of his parent company are on their way decides to hold onto this vital position. If the Germans can force him off it they may fortify it and delay further Red Army advances in this area.

Soviet Maxim MMG





OPPOSING FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

Soviet reinforced platoons should be taken from the Vistula-Oder Theatre Selector (page 84).

A BA-10 armoured car should be selected for the advance party.

GERMAN ARMY

A German reinforced platoon should be taken from the Replacement Army Theatre Selector (page 110). Alternatively, the German player can use The Last Levy Theatre Selector in the *Armies of Germany* book to represent an attack force.

SET-UP

This game is based on 'Scenario 10: Hold until Relieved' found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 145).

The Soviet player is the defender. The objective is a vital road junction. First, set up the objective in the centre of the table. Some road terrain pieces creating an intersection will represent this nicely. The junction can be placed up to 12" to the left or right of the exact centre of the table, but make sure that it is equidistant from the opposing players' starting edges. On the German side of the table some buildings should be placed in the set-up zone to represent the outskirts of the village. The Soviet player sets up one infantry squad and the BA-10 armoured car within 6" of the objective. Then he nominates half of the remaining



units (rounding down) to form the first reinforcement wave. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve. The German player can then set up any and all of their infantry anywhere on the table so long as they are more than 18" from the objective or any Soviet unit that is already deployed. These units can use the hidden set-up rules. All other units are left in reserve. The terrain on the table should be a mix of woodland and mixed vegetation. Some areas can be designated as deep snow and should be classed as rough terrain.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this scenario is to control the objective at the end of the game. To control the junction there must be a model from one of your infantry or artillery units (or a

transport including one such unit) within 3" of the objective at the end of the game, and there must be no enemy unit of any type within 3" of it.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the Soviet player must bring their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the Soviet table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Preparatory bombardment

Neither player is allowed to use a preparatory bombardment.

Air support

The Soviet Air Force maintained almost absolute air superiority over the Vistula-Oder battlefields and German troops were at the mercy of IL-2 Sturmovik and PE-2 attack aircraft. Once per game, a Soviet forward air observer can be given a Fire order to call in an air strike. The Soviet player can add +1 to their die roll when determining the type of air attack on the warplane type chart in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 86). An air strike cannot be called on a turn when there is reduced visibility.

General Winter

Snow is beginning to fall across the battlefield reducing visibility. At the start of each turn, the Soviet player rolls a die. On a roll of 1, 2, 3 and 4 the visibility is clear. If the roll is 5 or 6 heavy falling snow causes reduced visibility for that turn. Rules for reduced visibility can be found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 220). Rules for flares and muzzle flash should be ignored.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

Whichever side controls the road junction at the end of the game is the winner. If neither side can claim control of it the game is a draw.

SCENARIO 9: RACE TO THE PILECA RIVER

DESCRIPTION

By 15 January, even the German rear defensive positions had been breached and Soviet mechanised units were unleashed to exploit the chaos. The Germans simply had no defence in depth and the Red Army forces were advancing forward deep into Poland and East Prussia with no organised military forces to stop them. Villagers looked on in awe and fear as T-34s strewn with tank-riding troops followed by fast-moving trucks roared westward through their villages. If they were lucky, the Soviet troops kept moving but many hamlets suffered looting as the hungry troops scavenged for food and drink.

The task of the exploitation forces was to secure vital road junctions and bridges to deny their use to the Germans. A defended bridge could hold up an advance for days and give the Germans time to draw breath and organise their defences. Such a scenario was the race for the bridges over the Pileca River. This was one of the last river lines before the Soviets' ultimate goal of the Oder. The German command realised that if the Soviets could secure bridgeheads on the Pileca this would allow Red Army forces advancing from all three of the Vistula bridgeheads to link up. Not being able to depend on already emplaced troops, the Germans hastily put together battlegroups to act

as fire brigades. These formations would in effect race the Soviets to key positions in the hope of securing them first. In many cases, they were too late and found Soviet troops already in position whilst in others they arrived first and feverishly prepared themselves for the inevitable Red Army attack. However, many interesting situations occurred when the opposing forces arrived at the same time and the battle developed from a meeting engagement into a desperate struggle to secure a key objective.

This scenario recreates a battle between Soviet and German forces who have arrived at the same time at a river crossing that is strategically vital for both sides. Weather conditions are extreme and a grim battle for possession begins. The game can be played as a standard Bolt Action scenario with reinforced platoons but you may, of course, add armoured platoons as described in the *Tank War* supplement.

OPPOSING FORCES

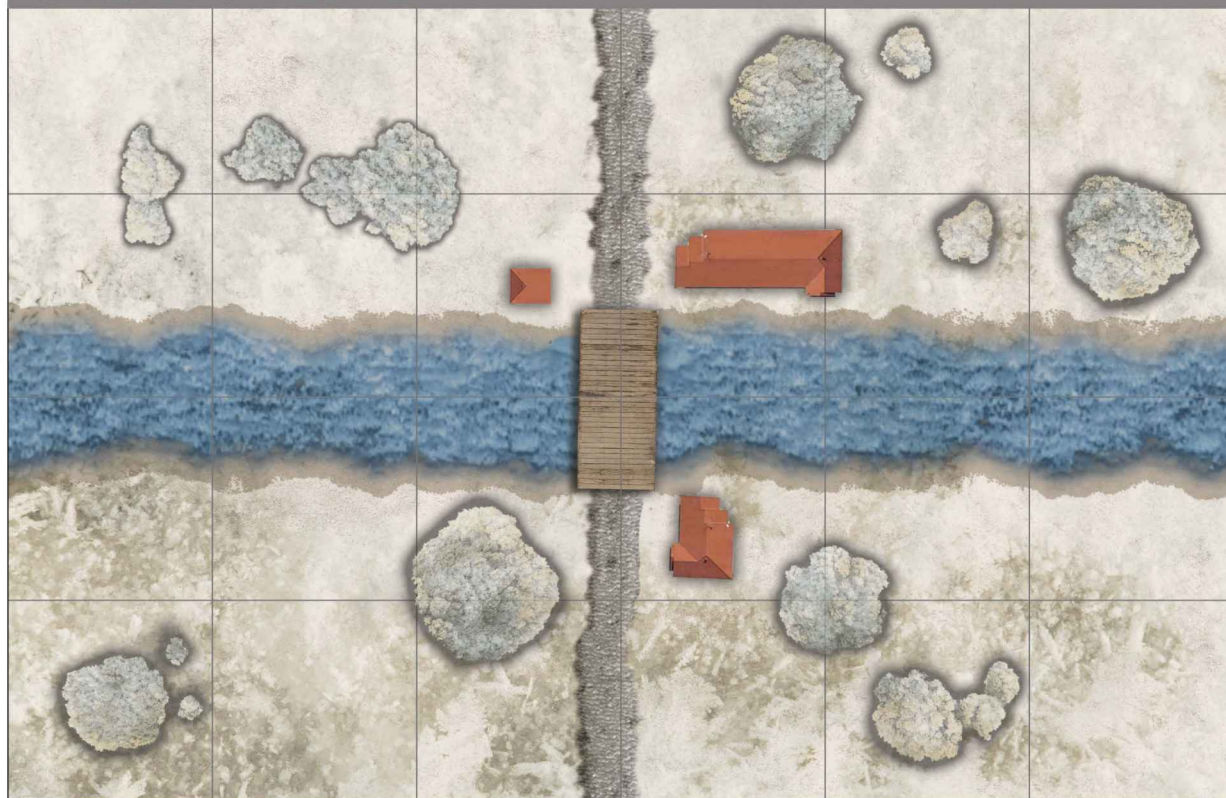
SOVIET ARMY

The Soviet forces should be selected using the Vistula-Oder Offensive Theatre Selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book.

German Assault Guns await orders.



SCENARIO 9: RACE TO THE PILECA RIVER



GERMAN ARMY

The German forces should be selected from the Forlorn Hope Army Selector found in this book on page 16.

As this represents a clash between two fast-moving forces, both army selections should be motorised/mechanised. When selecting an army, any infantry should be mounted in transports and any artillery should be provided with tows. Soviet infantry choices can include tank riders.

SET-UP

Use 'Scenario: 3: Key Positions' from the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 136) with the following adjustments.

Only three objectives are used: one represents a bridge over the Pileca River whilst the other two will represent fordable crossing points. A standard 6' x 4' table should be used with both player set-up zones being the long edges. A river roughly 6" wide should be laid across the table stretching between the centre points of the two shortest table edges, splitting the table into two 6' x 2' sections. The first objective – the bridge – should be placed over the river 36" from each short table edge. The German player should then place one ford objective on the river at least 12" away from the bridge. The Soviet player will then place the remaining ford at least 12" away from the

previously placed ford and bridge. Finally, a road is placed on the board, crossing the bridge, with one end connecting to each long table edge. The majority of the board should be considered snow and counts as rough ground. Wheeled vehicles and towed artillery cannot move over rough ground.

A number of wooded terrain features should be scattered on the table and a few small buildings may be placed within 12" of the bridge. The river itself should be considered frozen.

Once the objectives have been placed, both players roll a die. The highest scorer picks a long table side and declares which of their units (if any) are being left in reserve – this can be up to half of the units in their army, rounding down. The other player then does the same. No units are set up on the table at the start of the game. Any units not left in reserve form the player's first wave.

OBJECTIVE

Both the Soviet and German players are trying to secure the crossing points over the river. Whoever holds these will determine how the next phase of the battle will progress. Will the Germans be able to halt the Soviets or will the Red Army progress even further along the road to Berlin?



SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, both players must bring their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Frozen river

The River Pileca is frozen and may be crossed safely by all units using the bridge.

Infantry may cross the river safely at the fords. However, vehicles trying to cross at fords should roll on the thin ice table on page 137 of this book to avoid sinking to a watery demise. The crossing of any other section of the river by any unit requires a roll on the thin ice table.

Limited visibility

Heavy snow is falling across the battlefield, severely limiting visibility. At the beginning of each turn the German player rolls a die. On a roll of 4, 5 or 6, reduced visibility rules are in effect that turn. On a 1, 2 or 3, the snow has stopped temporarily and normal visibility rules

are in effect. The rules for reduced visibility are found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 220).

Air support

The Red Army Air Force maintained almost absolute air superiority over the Vistula-Oder battlefields, subjecting German forces to the regular attentions of IL-2 Sturmovik and PE-2 attack aircraft. Once per game, a Soviet forward air observer can be given a Fire order to call in an air strike. The Soviet player can add +1 to their die roll when determining the type of air attack on the warplane type chart in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 86). However, occasional Luftwaffe FW-190 fighter-bomber sorties were available to attack enemy bridgeheads. Once per game, a German forward air observer can be given a Fire order to call in an air strike. An air strike cannot be called on a turn when there is reduced visibility.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game, if you hold more crossing points than your opponent you win, otherwise the game is a draw. To hold an objective there must be a model from one of your infantry or artillery units (or a transport including one such unit) within 3" of the objective at the end of the game, and there must be no enemy unit of any type within 3" of it.

THE ROVING CAULDRONS

One of the unique features of the Vistula-Oder offensive was the incredible speed at which the Soviets advanced covering tens of kilometres every day. In many cases, German units could not get out of the way and were simply steamrollered by the Soviet juggernaut. However, standing orders from the Front commanders instructed the armoured units to bypass German units rather than engage them and risk slowing the advance. The rationale was that the follow-up infantry formations would mop up what was left of the surrounded and demoralised forces.

However, some of the bypassed units were largely untouched and still represented effective fighting forces. The prospect of standing and fighting with the promise of death or capture was understandably unpalatable. A better option was to head west back towards the German frontier avoiding battle where possible.

These largely motorised formations formed into ad-hoc battlegroups became popularly known as 'roving cauldrons'. Whilst many were eventually caught and destroyed, some managed to avoid encirclement after encirclement as they moved west. Cut off from any hope of replenishment, they stripped their damaged vehicles of spare parts to keep others moving and abandoned heavy equipment and guns when they were out of ammunition. This improvisation was one of the few highlight performances of German units during the Vistula-Oder offensive.

Travelling cautiously at night to avoid Soviet formations, they rested up by day, hiding vehicles in woods or amongst buildings. Often the Germans would raid the Red Army to secure food and other provisions. A large proportion of these encounters were with rear echelon Soviet units that were certainly not expecting serious opposition from any Germans they encountered. Many of these formations were NKVD security troops tasked with rounding up stragglers and ensuring that the 'liberated' populations adopted correct socialist values. Few of these units had faced a trained military force and were not equipped to deal with them.

Perhaps the most famous of the roving cauldrons was that of General Walther Nehring commander of the 24th Panzer Corps made up of the 16th and 17th Panzer

Divisions. Both divisions had been badly battered near the town of Kielce and bypassed by the 1st Ukrainian Front. Nehring realised that if he stayed put he would be encircled and annihilated. He therefore made a brave decision to breakout to the northwest. Later he joined up with the 342nd Infantry, which together with his panzers formed his main battlegroup. In an incredible stroke of luck, his forward scouts encountered an intact friendly fuel dump and Nehring was able to resupply many of his vehicles, which had been running on fumes. As he moved, he avoided any large-scale engagements but could not prevent small skirmishes between his scouts and various Soviet units. Nehring was also lucky that his westward path fell between the two advancing Soviet fronts.

The most dangerous moment for Nehring's troops was when they had to cross the Pileca River. Coming under attack from a Soviet armoured spearhead, the cauldron had to cross the 50-metre-wide river using a flimsy wooden bridge barely capable of taking tanks. Whilst a rearguard engaged the advancing T-34s, the main body crossed the bridge as quickly as possible.

With most of the force across the river, the remaining Panzer IVs broke off, withdrawing at full speed. Even as they started to cross the river the bridge began to collapse. In a display of quick thinking, two of the panzers were driven directly into the river, their turret roofs and superstructure propping up the bridge for a few more minutes. As the last tank crossed the bridge, it collapsed and prevented any immediate Soviet pursuit.

Narrowly avoiding the powerful 8th Guards Army outside Lodz, Nehring closed in on the German frontline. Behind him he left a trail of abandoned tanks and other vehicles that had finally run out of fuel. Approaching the River Nehring, he saw signposts set up by the Grossdeutschland Panzerkorps. Finally, after covering nearly 250 kilometres in 11 days, Nehring's lead elements linked up with a friendly armoured reconnaissance unit who were able to shepherd his forces home. Nehring had achieved the near impossible in getting his men out from behind the enemy lines. However, for his troops the respite was brief as the 16th Panzer and Grossdeutschland were almost immediately ordered back into the meat-grinder to try to halt a breakout from one of the Oder bridgeheads.



SCENARIO 10: AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

DESCRIPTION

A common feature of the Vistula-Oder offensive was the occasional contact deep behind Red Army lines of Soviet second line units and bypassed German formations desperately trying to avoid capture as they fled west. On most occasions, the German troops were hungry, demoralised and in a state of shock and the Soviet troops (usually NKVD formations) had little trouble in rounding up and disarming them.

However, on rare occasions, the NKVD faced a much tougher opponent: a German battlegroup that had maintained its cohesion under an exceptional commander and was not afraid to fight its way to freedom. Whilst moving westwards under the cover of darkness, the roving cauldron's scouts have detected an encamped Soviet unit. On closer examination, it appears to be a force of NKVD second echelon troops escorting a consignment of food and other supplies looted from the surrounding countryside. Appreciating his men's hunger, the battlegroup's commander decides that relieving the Ivans of their ill-gotten gains is worth the risk of discovery. Keeping his main formations moving westward, he creates a makeshift raiding party of his best infantry and detaches them for a night attack. Perhaps his men will eat well tomorrow.

OPPOSING FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

The Soviet forces should be selected using the NKVD Theatre Selector on page 66 of this book.

At least 50% (rounding up) of the Soviet forces should be second line NKVD troops, who are more accustomed to lauding it over cowering civilians than facing veteran grenadiers.

GERMAN ARMY

The German forces should be selected from the Forlorn Hope Army Selector (see page 16). At least 50% (rounding up) of the German forces should be Veterans.

SET-UP

This game is based on 'Scenario 11: Surrounded' from the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 146).

The NKVD player is the defender and picks a side of the table and sets up half of their units, rounding down, within 12" of the centre of the table. These units can use the hidden set-up rules (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook page 131). All other NKVD units are left in reserve (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook 132). These reserves represent a foraging patrol returning late to the encampment. The German player's units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The German player must also nominate half of their units, rounding up, to form their first wave. All other units are left in reserve. All reserves will enter the table using the confused fight rules found in the main scenario.

A standard 6' x 4' table is used with both player set-up zones being the long edges. A road should be laid across the table stretching between the centre points of the two shortest table edges splitting the table into two 6' x 2' sections. The majority of the table should be considered snow, but it is a good idea to break up the playing area with various woodland terrain pieces.

OBJECTIVE

The German player is trying to drive off or eliminate the NKVD forces to relieve them of supplies that will be vital to the roving cauldron as it continues to head west.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The battle begins. During Turn 1, the German player must bring their first wave onto the table. These units must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

Confused fight

Confusion reigns, the battlelines have become completely disordered, and reinforcements are pouring in from all directions. All units entering the table as reserves can enter from any point on any table edge, except the one from which the last enemy reserve entered that same turn. This means that at the beginning of the following turn, the first reserve can come in from any table edge – watch out!



SCENARIO 10: AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

GERMAN DEPLOYMENT EDGE

SOVIET SET-UP ZONE

Soviet Scouts infiltrate enemy lines.



Preparatory bombardment

The German player rolls a die: on a roll of 2+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the NKVD positions. On a 1, the barrage fails to take place, but the Germans have their orders and the attack must take place. When rolling on the preparatory bombardment table apply -1 to the die roll to reflect that this is an attack using mortars.

Flare

This is a night attack and this scenario should be played as a flare scenario. Once the NKVD realise that they are being assaulted they will attempt to fire illumination rounds to reveal the positions and numbers of the German attackers. Roll for flares as per the special rules listed on page 220 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook.

Snow/Ice /Frostbite

The entire battlefield is covered in snow and should be considered rough ground. Rules for snow can be found on page 137 of this book. Any freestanding water or rivers/streams should be considered under ice. The German troops should roll for the effects of frostbite (see page 138).

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least two more victory points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call with neither side holding the battlefield – a draw!

Waffen SS medium mortar





OPERATION BERLIN



Between 12 and 15 April, in preparation for Operation Berlin, Zhukov's 1st Byelorussian Front began the task of widening the bridgehead around Kustrin, whilst Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front made final preparations for an assault across the Neisse River. To the north, Rokossovsky's 2nd Byelorussian Front prepared to move against the 3rd Panzer Army to secure the northern flank.

Facing this build up were the forces of Army Group Vistula under the command of the diminutive Generaloberst Heinrici, known to his admirers and enemies alike as the Unser Giftzwerg ('Poison Dwarf'). Army Group Vistula comprised 3rd Panzer Army in the north and the 9th Army sitting across the main Soviet routes to Berlin on the Oder. Few German formations were near full strength and many were scratch formations created from reserve units with little or no experience of battle on the frontline. German mobile reserves comprised of one panzer and four panzergrenadier divisions. Two were Waffen-SS formations, 'Nordland' and 'Nederland', composed primarily of foreign volunteers. All had suffered heavy losses in the Vistula-Oder battles.

The strongest German defences were on the Seelow Heights – a barrier to the direct Soviet advance on Berlin. A chain of steep bluffs rose to a height of 50 metres or more forming the western edge of the Oder valley. Whilst the Heights themselves were formidable, the marshy ground between the Oder River and the Heights was well defended and would prove difficult going for the Soviets. The fortified towns of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder and Seelow itself would underpin the defences. A string of Führer directives operationally crippled the German defenders, forbidding any retreat or withdrawal unless approved by Hitler himself. This signed a virtual death warrant for many formations, preventing them from falling back to more favourable defensive positions closer to Berlin. The skies were also owned by the Soviet Air Force, which was free to strafe and attack any movement of supplies and reinforcements.

ASSAULT ON THE SEELOW HEIGHTS

At 05:00 on 16 April, Operation Berlin started with the usual artillery barrage from the 1st Byelorussian Front against the Seelow Heights. After 20 minutes, 143 searchlights were shone directly into the faces of the German defenders in an attempt to dazzle them. The lights, however, proved to be counter-productive creating confusing pools of shadow that made navigation difficult. As the first Soviet tanks advanced they encountered marshy terrain at the foot of Heights. Churned up mud reduced the columns of T-34s, IS-2s and SU-76s to a mere crawl whilst the infantry, who found the going much easier, lost touch with their armoured support. When the

infantry tried to assault the bridges over the Haupt Canal, German strongpoints laid down a withering combination of mortar and machine gun fire. The infantry was pinned down and the attack began to falter. Finally, the pressure of Stalin's orders forced Zhukov to throw both of his reserve tank armies into the battle against the guidelines issued to him by STAVKA.

These tanks then got in the way of the artillery that was trying to support the infantry and more traffic jams were created. 1st Byelorussian Front gained little ground on the first day and the expected breakthrough failed to materialise. Zhukov regrouped his forces for a renewed attack on 17 April. This was preceded by almost 800 PE-2 light bombers and a fresh artillery barrage. These attacks were more successful and the fortresses of Friedersdorf and Dolgelin were captured. Soviet forces were now in a position to assault Seelow itself. Throughout the day, German defenders inflicted massive losses on the Red Army and prepared anti-gun positions took a large haul of Soviet tanks. However, by the day's end Seelow had fallen and the German defences began to unravel. The Red Army now held part of the Reichsstrasse 1 Autobahn – a route that led directly to Berlin. A brilliantly coordinated night attack by the 3rd Shock Army then pierced the defences at Baztlow and the 5th Shock Army was able to pour through, finally providing Zhukov with his breakthrough. By 18 April, the German 9th Army and LVI Panzer Corps were close to collapse. The Soviet butcher's bill was high with the loss of over 50,000 troops and nearly 25% of their armour. By the end of 19 April, Zhukov's forces had advanced up Reichsstrasse 1 and taken the city of Munchenberg, only 29 kilometres from Berlin, putting that city within range of Soviet long-range artillery.



KONEV STRIKES

Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front began its assault with a 40-minute artillery barrage as a mass formation of IL-2 Sturmovik fighter-bombers laid a 250-mile-long smokescreen. Assaults across the Neisse River were made at multiple points whilst Red Army engineers strove under heavy fire to place bridges. They were largely successful and T-34s began to move across the river in large numbers. By the end of the day Konev had advanced 16 kilometres across a 27-kilometre front. As dawn broke on 17 April, the elite 3rd and 4th Guards Tank Armies threw themselves at the 4th Panzer Army and bypassed or overran its defensive positions. This ended any hopes that 4th Panzer

SEYDLITZ TROOPS

German attempts to reorganise their forces for the defence of Berlin were regularly hindered by the efforts of certain pro-Soviet factions. These so called 'Seydlitz troops' spread rumours of retreats and distributed false orders amongst already disorganised and demoralised German units. These groups were mainly comprised of members of the National Committee for a Free Germany, which prospered amongst German soldiers taken prisoner by the Soviet Union.

Dispatched behind enemy lines in German uniforms, these small groups of infiltrators spread false rumours, dispensed confusing orders and preached defeatism. In many cases they passed on information that specific German formations were withdrawing or in full retreat. Unfortunately, the German general staff believed in many of these reports, resulting in the orders for the arrest and execution of several innocent commanders. Such was the level of paranoia already existing in the German Army that the impact of the Seydlitz troops was much greater than had been expected. Many soldiers attempting to return to their units were needlessly held for interrogation by military police and other internal security forces, adding to the overall chaos.

Army could assist the 9th Army reeling under Zhukov's offensive. Forward Red Army units were then able to cross the River Spree, forcing the 9th Army to commit its remaining mobile reserves. This encouraged Konev to detach some of his forces towards the southern suburbs of Berlin. The German capital was not his main objective, but Stalin had left this option open in a covert attempt to increase rivalry between his commanders and 'encourage' Zhukov to accelerate his advance.

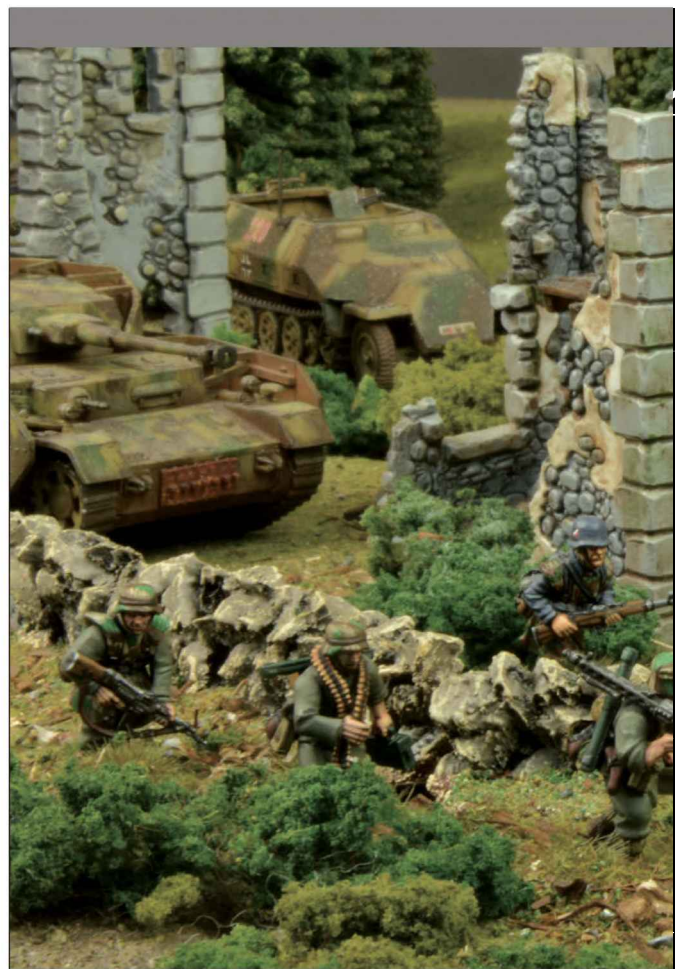
The battered German 9th Army was now in desperate trouble, split into three parts by Soviet breakthroughs. The main body regrouped at Baruth, but a large concentration remained isolated in Frankfurt-an-der-Oder.

ON TO BERLIN

With the 9th Army now cut off and the 3rd and 4th Panzer Armies pinned in place, Berlin was largely defenceless. Although well-equipped Waffen-SS troops defended the Reich Chancellery, the rest of the city depended on 50 Volksturm battalions of badly equipped old men and boys. Zhukov resolved to attack Berlin from three directions. One force advancing along Reichsstrasse 1 from the southeast whilst another would enter the city from the northeast. Finally, the 47th Army would sweep around the northern suburbs and then head south to cut Berlin off from any relief from the west. Konev's forces moving up from the south would completely isolate the city.

On 20 April, the first Red Army artillery shells fell within the boundaries of the city and the battle for Berlin had truly begun.

Even Hitler understood that the Oder defences had collapsed and the Red Army was close to the capital. Only now did he consider the defence of Berlin. Army Group Vistula was ordered to defend Berlin but the 9th Army was trapped and could not disengage. Only elements of the LVI Panzer Corps were able break contact and move back towards the city. This brought them into contact with Konev's forces who had just finished a staggering 60-kilometre advance before dwindling fuel stocks had brought them to a halt. There followed a vicious pitched battle where German troops equipped with a plentiful amount of Panzerfausts were able to inflict appalling losses on Soviet armour, setting the precedent for the battles in Berlin itself.



FALSE HOPE: STEINER TO THE RESCUE

Hitler and the general staff had become detached from reality, continuing to study maps that showed numerous German formations which were at minimal strength or destroyed. This produced an increasing series of fantastical orders from the Führerbunker demanding counter-offensives and defensive repositioning by non-existent units.

One formation Hitler fixated on was Steiner's III SS Germanic Panzer Corps. On paper a powerful formation, in reality it was depleted and bogged down at Oranienburg. To a deluded Hitler, it became the formation that could relieve Berlin and start the process of stabilising the Eastern Front. Steiner was ordered to advance at once and cut off the Soviet forces encircling it. Steiner was promised all available reserves, which were composed of a scratch division formed from Luftwaffe ground personnel and the 3rd Naval Division. More potent formations such as the 7th Panzer and the 25th Panzergrenadier Divisions were propping up the northern flank where 3rd Panzer Army was trying to

retreat westward in the hope of surrendering to the Western Allies. Most sane German field commanders knew the war was lost and their overriding objective was to allow as many as possible of their troops to surrender to the Americans and the British. To many, the ultimate horror was to fall into the hands of a Red Army seeking revenge for crimes committed against the Soviet Union. Even Steiner knew that his corps' advance to relieve Berlin would end in failure, but he kept up the pretence of readying his assault.

ENTER THE 12TH ARMY

Whilst Hitler raged about Steiner, General Wenck's 12th Army Group, positioned southwest of the city to face any American or British forces, was biding its time. As Western Allied moves towards Berlin seemed to have ceased, Field Marshall Keitel pleaded with Wenck asking him to move eastwards to save the Führer's life.

Wenck agreed and proclaimed that his forces would be ready on 25 April to enter Berlin. Wenck however, had no intention to advance towards Berlin, rather wishing to

Steiner's rag-tag formations make their futile advance towards Berlin



remain in contact with the Elbe to ensure that his men might have an escape route to the west. Instead of driving for the city he tried to reach the surrounded 9th Army and assist their breakout to the west. He did not intend to be caught in a battle of annihilation – the Führer could look after himself.

INTO THE CITY

On 23 April, the Red Army began its first attacks on the perimeter of the city. Running into heavy opposition, only the attacks from the east met reasonable success.

Advances to the south of Doberitz and the encirclement of Potsdam effectively sealed off Berlin from the west. General Weidling in command of the city's defences deployed the LVI Panzer Corps into defensive positions. 20th Panzergrenadier Division was sent to the southern defences whilst the 'Muenchenberg' Panzer Division took up positions in the southwest. SS-Panzergrenadier Divisions 'Nordland' and 'Nederland' covered the east whilst the 18th Panzergrenadier Division bolstered the north. All under-strength, they quickly merged with inexperienced Volkssturm defenders, providing some much-needed backbone. Small numbers of additional reinforcements also trickled into the city, including the Doenitz Naval Battalion.

Zhukov had an unexpected shock on 24 April when advanced elements of his 1st Byelorussian and Koniev's 1st Ukrainian Fronts met. Zhukov had believed that his forces would be taking Berlin alone and this incident shows the extent to which Stalin had played his commanders off against each other. However, Konev's forces had run into strong German defences bolstered by the deployment of the

18th and 20th Panzergrenadier Divisions with their 6,000 experienced grenadiers and over 20 tanks including Tigers.

BATTLES FOR THE AIRFIELDS

The Red Army concentrated much of its effort to capture the airfields of Gatow and Tempelhof which were still receiving a number of Luftwaffe aircraft bringing in a trickle of reinforcements and supplies. Single seat FW-190 fighters were transporting up to four passengers crammed into their fuselage spaces. Stalin was concerned that they could be used to evacuate Hitler or other members of the Nazi hierarchy. However, both Gatow and Tempelhof were very well-equipped with 12.8cm and 8.8cm anti-aircraft guns, easily adapted to the anti-tank role. Soviet attempts to take the airfield resulted in a bloody duel between tank and anti-tank guns with large numbers of Soviet tanks destroyed. Tempelhof was finally captured on 26 April.

Several ambitious German counter-attacks were met by stubborn Russian resistance and the panzer and panzergrenadier formations suffered losses they could ill-afford. In truth, many of these attacks were desperate efforts by the Waffen-SS who could expect little or no mercy from the Red Army. Entire units threw themselves at the enemy in suicidal attacks or defended to the last man. For the trapped civilians of Berlin these actions only prolonged their suffering and delayed the inevitable.



TOP SECRET

URBAN WARFARE

As the war in Europe had entered its final year, the Germans knew the final battles would take place in the urban areas of the Fatherland. The Wehrmacht could no longer call upon the massed tanks and mechanised infantry of the panzer corps to deliver victory. German thinking therefore became more focussed on defending the Reich's cities and towns where enemy gains would be in yards of territory rather than miles. Hitler also firmly believed that urban battles would galvanise the civilian population and battalions of Volkssturm to mount serious resistance against the 'Bolshevik Hordes'. The Red Army was not particularly enthusiastic about a long urban struggle. Its own experience had shown urban warfare to be terrifying and difficult to predict. Whilst the street battles in Stalingrad had greatly contributed to a change in Soviet fortunes they had also revealed the spectre of an attacking force being swallowed up and destroyed in a fierce defensive urban battle. Could the Red Army avoid such a fate?

Zhukov had special pamphlets printed and distributed to his 1st Byelorussian Front and insisted that each rifle division create

specialised street-fighting units. A massive photo-reconnaissance effort also allowed the Soviets to create a large scale model of Berlin to plan the street-by-street advances. As incidents of urban combat became more common, the Red Army was finding that its armoured units that had brilliantly led the headlong charge into the Reich were not the ideal tools for taking a well-defended city – they needed more infantry. However, the competitive rivalry between Zhukov and Konev to take the city had the effect of advancing the Red Army too fast. It was unable to exploit its numerical superiority as reinforcements were unable to catch up with the forward units. Although eventual victory was a foregone conclusion, countless Red Army infantrymen and tankers were to lose their lives needlessly to fulfil Stalin's desire to become the sole master of Berlin. However, as more artillery came forward the simple expedient of blowing the defenders out of their defences with massed direct artillery fire became a favoured approach.



ASSAULT ON THE REICHSTAG

By 28 April, with the capture of Gatow airport and continuing advances on Potsdam from the north, the political centre of Berlin was now tantalisingly within reach of the Red Army and the objective of flying a Soviet flag above the Reichstag on or before 1 May seemed achievable. The 2nd Guards Tank Army and 3rd Shock Army approached from the north towards the natural water barriers of the River Spree and Landwehr Canal, whilst 5th Shock Army was fighting its way toward the Reich Chancellery and the Brandenburg Gate from the east. 1st and 3rd Guards Tank Armies and 8th Guards Army were pushing up from the south. Defence of the government centre fell to a mix of primarily SS formations comprising of the Anhalt Division, elements of the SS 11th Panzer Grenadier Division and the remaining tanks of the SS 11th Herman von Salza Panzer Battalion. The Diplomatic Quarter facing the Spree was held by fanatical formations of SS-Polizei who refused to let other friendly units into their defence zone.

Elements of the 79th Rifle Corps were the first Soviet unit to spot the Reichstag – only 1,500 metres away – as they fought their way south down the Alt Moabit. A large number of Soviet POWs freed by the 79th during their recent advance were given weapons and drafted in to replace combat casualties. This corps was now in the best position to take the Reichstag, but only if it was done quickly. Forward scouting revealed that the Moltke Bridge over the Spree was still intact but heavily defended. Nevertheless in the early morning of 29 April, two battalions of the 79th RC, preceded by IS-2 heavy tanks, attempted to cross in darkness without artillery support. The first attack was beaten back with heavy losses, but a second wave succeeded and gained a foothold in the Diplomatic Quarter after vicious hand-to-hand fighting with SS security troops. Red Army tanks sent to bulldoze the barricades and support the infantry suffered almost 100% losses from German tank and anti-tank gunfire.

Occupiers of Berlin (L-R): anti tank grenadier, junior lieutenant of artillery, NKVD Internal Security Officer, by Ronald Volstad, © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Men at Arms 216: The Red Army of The Great Patriotic War 1941-45.



GREAT WAR PANZERS

The battle of Berlin has thrown up many strange stories, some of which may have some basis in reality.

One of the most intriguing is a set of photographs taken at the Lustgarten in Berlin immediately after the end of the fighting. The pictures clearly show two World War I vintage British Mk V tanks amongst the rest of the battlefield debris. Both tanks appear to have been destroyed by anti-tank fire, with the tracks of one suggesting it might have even been moving when hit. Historical analysis indicates that these vehicles were captured from the Soviets in 1941, possibly from a captured Red Army museum. A number of Mk Vs had been shipped to the White Russians in 1921 during the Russian Revolution and had probably been captured by the Soviets and put on display. In all likelihood, the tanks in Berlin were museum exhibits but had been engaged by the advancing Soviets who could not be sure of their status. However, more fanciful rumours suggest that these vehicles were actually made operational by the Volkssturm and used in the defence of Berlin. It is unlikely we will ever know the truth.

However, the noose around the German defenders' necks began to contract and the arrival of the 1st Polish Infantry Division provided much-needed manpower to replace the increasing casualties. A successful crossing of the Potsdam Bridge by the 8th Guards Army made an assault on the Reichstag likely on 30 April. During the evening, Hitler received his final briefing on the state of the Berlin defences. There was no good news and the master of the Third Reich decided that suicide was his only option with the Red Army less than 400 metres from his bunker.

As the sun rose on 30 April, Soviet eyes were firmly fixed on the Reichstag, which Stalin had reiterated needed to be taken by 1 May. The 79th Rifle Corps finally drove out all the defenders from the Diplomatic Quarter and the Ministry of the Interior, allowing the 207th and 150th Rifle Divisions to deal with the defences around the Reichstag. At 14:25 it was reported that a red flag had been spotted on the building and a message was sent to Moscow. However, Red Army troops had not even reached

Soviet armour storms into Berlin.





the walls of the building and the report was judged false, much to the anger of local commanders who feared Stalin's wrath. Assault troops were therefore ordered to storm the Reichstag without consideration of losses and raise a flag. At 18:00 the bricked-up entrance was breached and Soviet troops poured in to face withering fire from suicidal SS defenders. Finally, at 22:50 Red Banner Party No.5 reached the roof and the flag was unfurled meeting Stalin's deadline by 70 minutes! Whilst the assault was underway, a few hundred metres away Hitler committed suicide. Stalin had achieved his objective and won a very personal battle with the Nazi leader.

Despite Hitler's death, the fighting was to last another day and a half as the remaining defenders either melted

away, shedding their uniforms and weapons or fought to the death to avoid capture. With the fall of the Reich Chancellery on 2 May, the Berlin garrison commander, General Weidling, and his command staff formally surrendered bringing to an end Operation Berlin. Although a magnificent achievement for the Red Army, the toll was horrendously high. From the start of operations on 16 April, the Soviets had sustained over 300,000 casualties and lost 2,156 armoured vehicles. The German armed forces in turn lost a staggering 480,000 men. Although the Road to Berlin had come to an end, fighting would continue for another five days. In Czechoslovakia, the Soviets and Patton's US 3rd Army were closing on the historic city of Prague, which was beginning its own fight for freedom.



FIGHTING OPERATION BERLIN WITH **BOLT ACTION**

Although the final Soviet assault against Berlin usually conjures images of intense street-fighting in the city itself, much of the operation was fought in the surrounding countryside and suburbs as the Red Army firstly broke through the final defences of the Oder and then went on to surround and isolate the city for the final push. Although these manoeuvres to isolate the city were primarily to prevent reinforcements coming to its aid or allow its defenders to break out, they were also a 'hands off' notification to the Western Allies. Stalin wanted Berlin for himself, an ultimate symbol of the defeat of National Socialism by Communism

and his own personal triumph over Hitler.

This provides a rich source of scenario ideas for Bolt Action players: the initial assault on the Seelow Heights, desperate German breakout attempts, or the final urban assaults on the Reichstag and the Reich Chancellery.

The Germans' need to scrape the bottom of the barrel to man the city defences also throws up an intriguing mixture of oddball units. These ranged from the fanatical foreign volunteers of the Waffen-SS, the exhausted and demoralised grenadiers, to the old men of the Volkssturm and the tragic children of the Hitler Youth.

The police and fire brigades were raided of their most able men whilst various military schools had their students drafted directly into the frontline. Obsolete early war training panzers were mixed with the latest Tiger and Panther variants into ad-hoc battlegroups, whilst in the trenches volunteers with World War I-vintage small arms shared their rations with assault rifle-armed grenadiers sporting infra-red night vision equipment. This all provides the German player with options to field many interesting and thematic forces.

TERRAIN

Operation Berlin was fought across a wide range of terrain, so more or less any table set-up would be fine. For Berlin itself, the terrain is primarily dense urban with many buildings reduced to ruins by Allied bombing and the effects of Soviet artillery. There is, however, a surprising amount of parkland in Berlin, such as the zoological gardens and the Tiergarten which, being very close to the Reichstag itself, became part of the battlefield. This allows some unique and asymmetrical terrain options to be experimented with in scenarios set in Berlin. For such an important city, the actual fortifications are curiously primitive. Apart from the three enormous flak towers, the defences facing the Red Army were generally hastily constructed, comprised mainly of anti-tank ditches and barricades built and constantly repaired by a civilian population intimidated by local Nazi paramilitary groups. Berlin was also served by a large number of canals that enhanced the German defences, forcing the Red Army to either conduct expensive bridge crossings or resort to opposed assaults by boats. The close urban terrain proved lethal to Soviet armoured vehicles subject to constant ambushes from tank-killing infantry groups armed with the lethal Panzerfaust or well dug-in German tanks and tank destroyers.

Many engagements were fought in the outskirts of the city to contest the Red Army's attempts to isolate it. These battles were fought over small towns and villages very well served with excellent roads perfect for mechanised movement. Dense woodland also provided hiding places for large groups of the German military and frightened civilians, adding additional interesting terrain for Berlin scenarios.

SCENARIOS

GENERAL SCENARIOS

All of the scenarios in the *Bolt Action* rulebook are suitable for games set during Operation Berlin, but the following Attacker–Defender scenarios are particularly applicable:

Scenario 7: Envelopment: During Operation Berlin, one of the Soviets' initial objectives was the isolation of the 9th Army on the Oder River to prevent it pulling back into the city. The eventual breakout of the army along with thousands of civilians through the town of Halbe is an epic story as the rag-tag German formations attempt to break through to American lines. In this scenario, the Red Army will be the defenders as the Germans try to get as many units off the table as possible.

Scenario 9: Point Defence: Fighting in Berlin was conducted on a street-by-street basis as the Red Army closed in on its primary objectives in the centre of the city. Scenarios can range from the capture of small defensive positions to the enormous assaults on the Reichstag and Reich Chancellery.

Scenario 10: Hold Until Relieved: During the Berlin battles, Soviet commanders were constantly aware of Stalin's aggressive timetable to have Berlin captured by 1 May. This caused many Soviet units to proceed headlong deep into German defences, often leaving supporting formations behind. Once the objective was reached it was a question of holding out against furious German counter-attacks until more Red Army forces arrived.

Scenario 11: Surrounded: The story of the battle of Berlin is full of incidents of German forces surrounded by superior Soviet numbers and in many cases fighting to the death in attempts to allow comrades and civilians to escape or, as was the case for many Waffen-SS units, to avoid capture and deadly retribution for their previous sins.

SPECIAL RULES FOR OPERATION BERLIN SCENARIOS

Preparatory bombardment

Whilst the Red Army enjoyed enormous artillery superiority in Operation Berlin, it was most effective in direct support of the army's tanks and infantry firing over open sights. Preparatory bombardments were often a mixed blessing for the Soviet soldiers as the demarcation lines between various Red Army formations became blurred and confused. Many Soviet formations ended up being targeted by their own guns and on several occasions artillery units were even subject to counter-battery fire from friendly units.

The Soviet player may always add +1 to their die-roll for preparatory bombardments. However, the Soviet player should also roll a die for each of their own units. On a roll of 6 that unit is also subject to 'friendly fire', the

TOP SECRET

WUNDERWAFFE

Even when the Red Army was at the gates of Berlin rumours still circulated amongst the fighting men and civilians that, even in this darkest hour, Nazi science would create wonder weapons to snatch victory in the final hours. Whilst it is true that many advanced weapons were on the drawing board, very few had made it to the prototype stage, ready for field-testing. But some, such as infra-red night sights, were definitely used in the battle of Berlin, as were the Fleigerfaust (also known as the Luftfaust) infantry anti-aircraft rockets.

Perhaps the most revolutionary weapon design rumoured to have been used in the final battle was the X-7 Rotkäppchen ('Red Riding Hood'). This was the world's first anti-tank guided missile (ATGM), which had a range of just over one kilometre and carried a 2.5kg shaped charge capable of penetrating the armour of even an IS-2 heavy tank. The missile was guided to its target using a rapidly unravelling spool of wire, whilst a flare allowed the operator to track the weapon and guide it onto its target. Some reports allege that around 400 had been produced by the end of the war and that some had indeed been used in anger against the Soviets outside Berlin.

Nachtjäger! Landsers armed with the latest weaponry.



effect of which should be rolled as normal on the preparatory bombardments table.

Air support

During the closing days of Operation Berlin, the Luftwaffe had virtually ceased to exist. No forward air observers can be selected for the German side.

The Soviets have complete air superiority and once per game, a forward air observer unit may be given a Fire order to designate an enemy unit as the target of an air strike. However, as this air strike will be against units in a dense urban environment, the possibility of friendly fire incidents increases. When rolling on the air strike table, apply a -1 to the die roll. Results of 0 and 1 will have the 'rookie pilot' effect.

City fight

Much of the fighting in the battle for Berlin was conducted in a dense urban environment and all special rules for city fighting (see page 145) should be used where desired.

Berlin barricades

The residents of Berlin became unwilling experts at creating barricades and trenches to block their streets.

- In any urban Berlin scenario where the Germans are the defenders they receive two free barricades, which can be set-up in their deployment zone. Each barricade will have a maximum width of 6" and a depth of 1".
- Any troops whose bases touch the barricade will receive protection. A barricade will provide a -3 cover bonus to its defenders for non-HE fire. HE weapons can damage the barricade and it follows all the rules for a building in this respect.
- Any unit assaulted across a barricade counts as being in a defensive position. Tanks are not allowed to assault or push aside barricades.



Minefields

In Attacker–Defender scenarios, the German player – if defending – may place two free minefield sections anywhere in the friendly deployment zone.

An unequal struggle

During Operation Berlin the Red Army was able to concentrate its forces and outnumber its German opponents across the battlefield. If you want to simulate this situation in any Attacker–Defender scenarios where the Soviets are the attacking force, we recommend using the special rules for ‘An Unequal Struggle’ (see page 14).

Fanatics

Both sides realised that the battle of Berlin was the culmination of nearly four years of savage and no-quarter fighting on the Eastern Front. Many Germans believed they were fighting for their very existence, whilst the Red Army was determined to finally bring the Great Patriotic War to a close. As such, if both players agree, all units of both sides can be classed as fanatic.

OPERATION BERLIN SCENARIOS

The following three scenarios are designed to reflect various incidents and situations during Operation Berlin:

Scenario 11: The Seelow Heights

Scenario 12: Tank Hunting in the Big City

Scenario 13: Target Reichstag – Crossing the Spree

Red Death from above- German troops strafed by a Red Army fighter.



OPERATION BERLIN THEATRE SELECTORS

GERMAN ARMY:

- Extended Last Levy This book page 109
- Forlorn Hope This book page 16

SOVIET ARMY:

- 1945 – Berlin *Armies of the Soviet Union*

EXTENDED LAST LEVY THEATRE SELECTOR

A German force for the Extended Last Levy must comprise one or more reinforced platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each reinforced platoon is made up as follows:

Lieutenant (First or Second)

2 Infantry squads: Volkssturm squads, Hitler Youth squads, Kriegsmarine squads

Headquarters

0–1 Captain or Major

0–1 Medic team

0–1 Forward observer (artillery only)

Infantry

0–4 Infantry squads: Heer Grenadier squads, Osttruppen squads, Volkssturm squads, Hitler Youth squads, Replacement Army squads, Sicherungs (Security) Battalion squads, Feldgendarmerie squads, Kriegsmarine squads, Luftwaffe Field Divisions squads, maximum of one Heer Veteran Grenadier squad, maximum of 1 Waffen-SS squad (late war), maximum of 1 Volks Grenadier squad, maximum of 1 Feldjägerkorps Squad or a maximum of 1 Sturmioniere squad

0–1 MMG team

0–1 Mortar team: Light or medium

0–1 Panzerschreck team

0–1 Panzer-Zestorer Truppen

0–2 Sniper teams

Artillery

0–2 guns from:

Anti-tank gun: PaK 36, Panzerbuchse 41, PaK 38, PaK 40, PaK 43, PaK 44, Schweres Wurfgerats 41 Howling Cow (see 150mm Nebelwerfer for details)

Anti-aircraft gun: Flak 38, Flakvierling 38, Flak 36 or 88mm AA/AT Flak 36

Armoured cars

0–1 Armoured car or Recce vehicle from: Motorcycle with machine-gun sidecar, SdKfz 222, SdKfz 234/1, SdKfz 234/2, Puma, SdKfz 234/3, SdKfz 234/4, SdKfz 250/9, SdKfz 251/23, SdKfz 250/10 or SdKfz 250/11, SdKfz 234 Mit 'Luchs' Turm

Tank, Tank destroyers, Assault guns, Self-propelled artillery and Anti-aircraft vehicles

0–1 vehicle from: Panzer II Ausf L, Flammpanzer B2(f), Panzer IV Ausf H or J, StuG III Ausf G or H, StuG IV, StuH42, Marder I, Marder II, Marder III Ausf H or M, RSO/PaK 40, Panther Ausf A or G, Tiger I, Tiger II, Panzer VIII Maus, Grille, Wespe, Hummel, Jagdpanzer IV, Jagdpanzer IV(L70), Hetzer, Jagdpanther, Jagdtiger, Sturmtiger, SdKfz 251/9 Stummel, SdKfz 251/16 Flammpanzerwagen, Borgward Wanze Ausf C, SdKfz 251/17, SdKfz 251/22 Pakwagen, SdKfz 250/8 Stummel, SdKfz 251/1 Stuka zu Fuss, SdKfz 7/1 or 7/2, Opel Blitz with Flak 38, Wirbelwind, Ostwind, SdKfz 251/21 Drilling, Pantherturn

Transports and Tows

0–1 Transport vehicles per infantry unit in the reinforced platoon from: SdKfz 10, SdKfz 7, Truck, Maultier, Kubelwagen, Schwimmwagen, SdKfz 251/1, SdKfz 250/1, SdKfz 251/10

0–1 Tow from: SdKfz 10, SdKfz 7, Truck, Maultier, SdKfz 4, Raupenschlepper Ost, Kettenkrad, Horse-drawn limber

THE REPLACEMENT PANZER FORCE

As the need for additional tanks to defend the Reich became more urgent, a decision was taken to induct various panzer training schools directly into the army in a similar way that infantry NCO schools were being drafted into the Replacement Army. The newly formed Panzer Ausbildungs Verbände ('Replacement tank forces') boasted a wide variety of vehicles from the ultra-modern Tiger II to obsolete versions of the Panzer II and III.

At least one of these formations, Panzer Ausbildungs Bohmen, fought in the streets of Berlin.

As part of the Extended Last Levy Theatre Selector, the German player may choose the following Tanks as part of their vehicle choice.

Tiger II: Inexperienced, 444pts

Tiger I: Inexperienced, 316pts

Panzer II Ausf A, B, C or F: Inexperienced, 84pts

Panzer III Ausf C–F: Inexperienced, 108pts



ADDITIONAL GERMAN UNITS

THE GERMAN REPLACEMENT ARMY REPLACEMENT ARMY SQUAD

The majority of German troops based in the homeland were part of the so-called Replacement Army ('Ersatzheer'). Rather than being an army of frontline fighting troops, it was composed of units containing either raw untrained conscripts or soldiers finishing their basic training in preparation for being sent to the front as replacements.

Although never intended as fighting formations, the grave crisis presented by the Allied encroachment on and penetration of the Reich's borders meant that many were thrown into the meat grinder of the frontlines to serve side by side with first class Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS combat

divisions in defence of 'holy German soil'. Brave as the individual members of the Replacement Army may have been, it often took the measured brutality of Feldgendarmarie squads to keep these units in the line. Felix Steiner commander of the 3rd SS Corps reported that he received 5,000 Luftwaffe pilots as reinforcements. The commander of the 3rd Panzer Army remarked that on Hitler's maps, 'there was a little flag saying here is the 7th Panzer Division even though it came to me without a single tank, truck, piece of artillery or even a machine gun. We have an army of ghosts.'

Cost	20pts (Inexperienced Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles for +4pts each - The NCO can have a submachine gun instead of a rifle for +3pts - Up to 1 man can have a light machine gun for +20pts – another man becomes the loader - Up to 2 men can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts each
Special Rules	- Shirkers: Even the most dedicated member of a Replacement Army squad would realise that they would not survive any length of time in the frontline and would likely keep their head down, ignoring orders to advance or hold off a determined Soviet assault.

PANZER-ZESTORER TRUPPEN

As the Germans switched to a more defensive strategy in 1943, there was more focus on the importance of infantry anti-tank weapons. Germany simply could not produce enough standard anti-tanks guns to meet all needs, so specialist infantry anti-tank units were formed that could be fitted into the infantry formations as required. Whilst in many cases the anti-tank teams were scattered piecemeal

amongst the various platoons certain dedicated Panzer-Zestorer Truppen units with up to three Panzerschreck teams would be deployed to meet specific armoured threats.

Many of these teams relied on a horse-drawn cart for transport but, late in the war, special racks were provided for a number of vehicles to allow them to be converted to prime movers for these units.

Cost	105pts (Regular Infantry), 137pts (Veteran Infantry)
Composition	1 NCO and 6 men
Weapons	SMG, anti-tank grenades
Options	- Up to 3 men can have a Panzerschreck for +20pts each – for each Panzerschreck another man becomes the loader - Any man who is not part of a Panzerschreck team may be given a Panzerfaust in addition to his SMG for +5pts each
Special Rules	- Tank hunters





PANTHERTURM

From 1943, Panther turrets were mounted in fixed fortifications; some were normal production models, but most were made specifically for the task, with additional roof armour to withstand artillery fire. Two types of turret emplacements were developed: the Pantherturm III – ‘Betonsockel’ – on a concrete base, and the Pantherturm I – ‘Stahluntersatz’ – on a steel base. These turrets were built into a larger structure in which they could house ammunition and crew quarters. A total of 182 of these were installed in the fortifications of the Atlantic Wall and Siegfried Line (West Wall), 48 in the Gothic Line and Hitler Line, 36 on the

Eastern Front, and two for training and experimentation, for a total of 268 installations by March 1945. There is some debate about whether Pantherturm were installed for the battle of Berlin and the photos may indeed show deliberately buried Panthers, but for the purposes of *Bolt Action* this should not make a difference.

With barely any part other than the turret itself showing above ground, a well-camouflaged position could dominate a vast swathe of ground, or vital approaches to towns or other objectives, and would prove extremely costly to approach.

Cost	282pts (Inexperienced)
Weapons	1 turret-mounted super-heavy anti-tank gun with co-axial MMG
Damage Value	10+ (heavy tank)
Special Rules	- The Pantherturm counts as a vehicle. It is always counted as in hard cover to attackers and counts immobilised damage as a crew stunned result instead. It cannot move for the entire game and is therefore always set-up onto the table (up to 12" from the player's table edge) even in scenarios that do not allow initial set-up of units.



The Colossal Maus supported by a screen of infantry.



PANZER VIII MAUS

One of the most enigmatic armoured fighting vehicles of World War II was the VK100.01 Porsche Type 205. To any serious student of World War II AFVs it is better known as the Panzerkampfwagen VIII Maus ('Mouse').

This example of late war German imagination may be named after a tiny rodent but it is anything but mouse-like. Weighing an astonishing 188 metric tons the Maus still holds the record as the heaviest fully enclosed armoured fighting vehicle ever built. Unlike the majority of the so-called 'paper panzers' –advanced German tank designs which only existed in technical schematics and

project documentation – the Maus was actually built with two prototypes almost complete and perhaps as many as nine others under construction when Hitler cancelled the programme in late 1943. There are unsubstantiated rumours that one of these prototype vehicles may have been used in combat against the Soviets. Speculations on how the Maus would have actually performed in combat are, of course, securely in the realms of the hypothetical. However, one of the great things about Bolt Action and wargaming in general is you can experiment with these remarkable examples of 'what might have been'.

Cost	464pts (Inexperienced), 580pts (Regular), 696pts (Veteran)
Weapons	1 turret-mounted super-heavy anti-tank gun, with co-axial light howitzer and one pintle-mounted MMG on the turret.
Damage Value	11+ (super-heavy tank)
Special Rules	- Tiger fear - Slow - Mobile fortress: To fulfil its role as a breakthrough tank, the Maus had extremely advanced heavy armour (for its period). There is no penetration modifier for hitting a Maus from the side or top, and the penetration modifier for hitting a Maus in its rear arc is reduced to +1. - Götterdämmerung: As the Maus would have only seen action in the last days of the Third Reich, and probably suffered from technical issues and supply shortages, roll a die every time the vehicle completes a move: 1: Broken down/out of fuel: The vehicle is immobilised for the rest of the game. 2: Breaking down/fuel low: The vehicle may make one more move after this one, then runs out of fuel and is immobilised. 3+: OK: Continue as normal, rolling again after next move. - 128mm KwK 44: This gun was almost as effective at long ranges as at short range – so does not suffer the -1 penetration penalty when shooting at targets over half range. It counts a full +7 penetration bonus at all ranges. - Co-axial light howitzer: Although the 75mm KWK44 L36 would in any other tank be a respectable main gun, this light howitzer was fitted on the Maus as a co-axial weapon. When fired instead of the main gun, this allows the Maus to fire indirectly HE(2") rounds or 4" smoke rounds.

SELECTORS:

The Maus counts as a tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon Selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. In addition, if you want to use it within the context of a plausibly historical force, consider that any operational Maus prototype would have fought during the dying days

of the Third Reich. The Panzer VIII Maus may therefore be taken as a tank choice in the 1945 – Last Levy force selector found in the *Armies of Germany* book on page 95. Note that the Götterdämmerung rule is the same as the fuel shortages rule... do not roll twice for the Maus!

SDKFZ 234 MIT 'LUCHS' TURM

An unusual late war hybrid, this armoured car was an amalgamation of the SdKfz 234 Puma chassis and the Panzer III Luchs turret. Whilst this might not have been

a production vehicle, it is a fine example of German field innovation as various cannibalised components are fused to create a completely new vehicle.

Cost	80pts (Inexperienced), 100pts (Regular), 120pts (Veteran)
Weapons	1 turret-mounted light autocannon and co-axial MMG
Damage Value	7+ (armoured car)
Special Rules	- Recce (dual-direction steering)

A Luchsturm field conversion faces the lead elements of a Soviet thrust.





THE PANZERFAUST

The German army's first encounter with the Soviet T-34 in the summer of 1941 had a profound impact on both tank design and future infantry anti-tank weapons. The writing was already on the wall for the anti-tank rifle as increasingly thicker armour on tanks made the weapon virtually obsolete. Now, the only way for a German infantryman to destroy a modern enemy tank was to risk a dangerous close assault with an anti-tank grenade. This was usually a one-way ticket to a posthumous decoration. Tanks were prone to mutually supporting each other with 'back scratching', the practice of firing an MG at a friendly tank to clean off enemy infantry, or relying on the protection of friendly infantry. After initial experiments with shaped-charge rifle grenades, tests began on a man-portable, rocket-assisted grenade. The first experimental prototype, the Faustpatrone 42, was field tested in 1942 but its short range and propensity to roast its user's hands made it an unpopular weapon. By mid-1943 a much-improved version of the weapon – the Panzerfaust 30 – was tested. With an effective range of 30 metres, the Panzerfaust could easily penetrate the side or rear armour of any tank in service at that time. The weapon proved very easy to use. Ideally fired from a kneeling position, a simple flip-up sight assisted aiming. Once fired the launch tube was discarded. If a Panzerfaust hit its target, the explosion of

its 140mm shaped charge would create a blowtorch-like concentrated stream of hot gas to burn a small hole through up to 200mm of armour. The effect on the unlucky tank crew was likely to be terminal. By 1944, the Panzerfaust 30 was in mass production and proving very popular with German infantrymen who were astounded at how such a basic weapon could destroy a heavy tank. Even the largely untrained members of the Volkssturm could be instructed in its use and many Soviet tanks were reported to have fallen victim to it in the battles in and around Berlin.

The main downside of the weapon was its significant back blast, which could badly burn anyone unlucky enough to be behind it, and the copious dirt and debris thrown up by the blast would often give away the firer's position. If a soldier missed with his first shot, he would be unlikely to fire another from the same position. The back blast also made it difficult to fire the weapon from enclosed spaces such as buildings and bunkers. In late 1944, both the Panzerfaust 60 and 100 variants went into service, extending the weapon's range and improving reliability. Amongst the troops, it gained several nicknames including the Marschallstab ('Marshal's Baton') or more macabrely the Ivan Morder (Ivan Murderer). The Volkssturm more practically called it the Volks-PaK ('the People's anti-tank gun').

SOVIET COUNTERMEASURES: 'THE BEDSPRING DEFENCE'

The rising number of losses of Soviet armour accredited to Panzerfausts was a cause of increasing concern to Red Army tank crews who became very vocal in demanding some form of enhanced protection. The science of the shaped charge was well known, as was the possible countermeasure of trying to detonate the warhead before it struck the tank's armour. Since 1943 German tanks had started carrying Schürzen, armour skirts originally designed to protect against Soviet anti-tank rifles. However, reports had been emerging that these plates had provided some small protection against American Bazookas by causing the shaped warhead to explode away from the main armour and reducing the 'blowtorch' armour-piercing effect. This prompted a number of Soviet tank crews to 'field fit' Schürzen-style armour plates to their T-34s. Many of these were crude fitments and of doubtful value. In 1945, official tests were conducted with wire mesh screens fitted to the tank by

HEROES OF THE SOVIET UNION: JUNIOR SERGEANT VASILY KHARINAEVICH KHANTAEV

During the Red Army's assault on Berlin, many heroes emerged but none more so than Junior Sergeant Vasily Khantaev. An ethnic Buryat (Mongolian), he had joined the army soon after the start of the German invasion.

He fought as an artilleryman at Kursk where he was wounded in July 1943. He recovered to take part in the Red Army's advances through the Ukraine and Poland on the Road to Berlin. By the time he reached the Reich's capital, Khantaev was the commander of a ZIS-3 76mm divisional gun. His team were a mix of the various ethnic races of the USSR and provided a fine example of the unity of purpose that the Soviet peoples shared in the desire to defeat the Germans. During the Berlin campaign itself, Khantaev's team excelled in supporting the troops fighting their way into the capital. They were credited with the destruction of no less than 11 machine gun teams and six enemy snipers, demonstrating an uncanny ability

KHANTAEV'S ZIS-3

Cost	110pts (Veteran)
Composition	4
Weapons	1 medium anti-tank gun and light howitzer
Special Rules	- Gun shield - Team weapon - Fixed - Versatile: The ZIS-3 can also fire as a light howitzer. - Stubborn: Khantaev's team would not abandon their gun easily. - Tough fighters - For the Motherland! At the beginning of any game turn the Soviet player may remove the ZIS-3 permanently and replace it with a Veteran Infantry squad of 1 NCO and 4 men armed with SMGs.

TOP SECRET

USING 'BEDSPRING' ADDITIONAL ARMOUR IN *BOLT ACTION*

There is little documentary evidence on how effective these defences were, but Soviet players may add 'bedspring armour' to T-34 tanks for a cost of +10pts. Any tank so fitted benefits from the Schürzen armoured skirts special rule:

Schürzen armoured skirts

Anti-tank rifles and shaped charges such as Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck weapons do not get the +1 penetration bonus for hitting a vehicle on their side. This option may be chosen for any T-34 using the 1945 – Berlin Theatre Selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book for +10pts.

rectangular frames as a stop-gap anti-Panzerfaust defence. When tanks fitted with these devices were initially observed by German troops it was reported that the Soviets were securing 'looted beds' to their tanks as added protection which caused some grim hilarity.

to place the 76mm HE shells exactly where they were required – often through small windows and entrances. They were also highly skilled in using the ZIS-3 as an anti-tank gun, claiming three tanks and two armoured cars on 1 May alone. Surprisingly, Khantaev's team were also excellent assault troops. On 26 April, he was supporting Red Army troops engaged in house-to-house fighting and could no longer use the 76mm as the enemy and friendly soldiers were too close together. Rather than hanging back, Khantaev picked up his PPSH submachine gun and led his team on a charge into the thick of the vicious hand-to-hand combat where they eventually killed or captured several German tank hunter teams. Such heroism was not ignored and he was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union with Gold Star immediately after the war. Khantaev lived a long life and died in 1991.

SCENARIO 11: THE SEELOW HEIGHTS

DESCRIPTION

At dawn on 16 April, a colossal artillery barrage laid down by gunners of the 1st Byelorussian Front hammered into German positions in the Seelow Heights. Twenty minutes later, almost 150 searchlights were shone into the eyes of the defending German troops. With the murderous barrage walking forwards through the German lines, the lights had a negative effect with pools of shadow creating problems for Soviet navigation. The marshy ground at the foot of the Heights reduced the Red Army armour to a crawl whilst the supporting infantry found the going much easier and began to lose touch with the slower armoured support whose guns and howitzers were essential for breaking up German defensive positions.

This scenario pitches a large Red Army force against

entrenched German defenders who, although heavily outnumbered, are dug-in in a series of defensive lines comprising of trenches, bunkers and fortifications.

Additionally, the Soviets will need to progress up the Heights, which is not ideal terrain for armoured forces.

OPPOSING FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

Forces should be chosen from the Seelow Heights Theatre Selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book.

GERMAN ARMY

Forces should be chosen from the Forlorn Hope Theatre Selector (page 16).

Seelow Heights, by Peter Dennis, © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 159: Berlin 1945



German Jagdtiger heavy
tank destroyer



The German player picks a force to an agreed points cost; the Soviet player picks a force total of up to three times that amount (e.g., 1,500 points if the German player has 500 points).

The German player also receives three bunkers, six hard cover linear obstacles and two minefields.

The linear obstacles represent walls, sandbag emplacements and trenches, so you can use varying terrain pieces to represent them. Each obstacle should be up to 6" long and 1" tall. All these terrain pieces will give hard cover.

Bunkers should be large enough to accommodate a single unit of infantry or an artillery piece.

Minefields are approximately 6" x 6" and may be marked or unmarked at the option of the German player.

SET-UP

The battle is played across the length of a 6' x 4' table. One short edge should be nominated the German player's end and the other the Soviet player's.

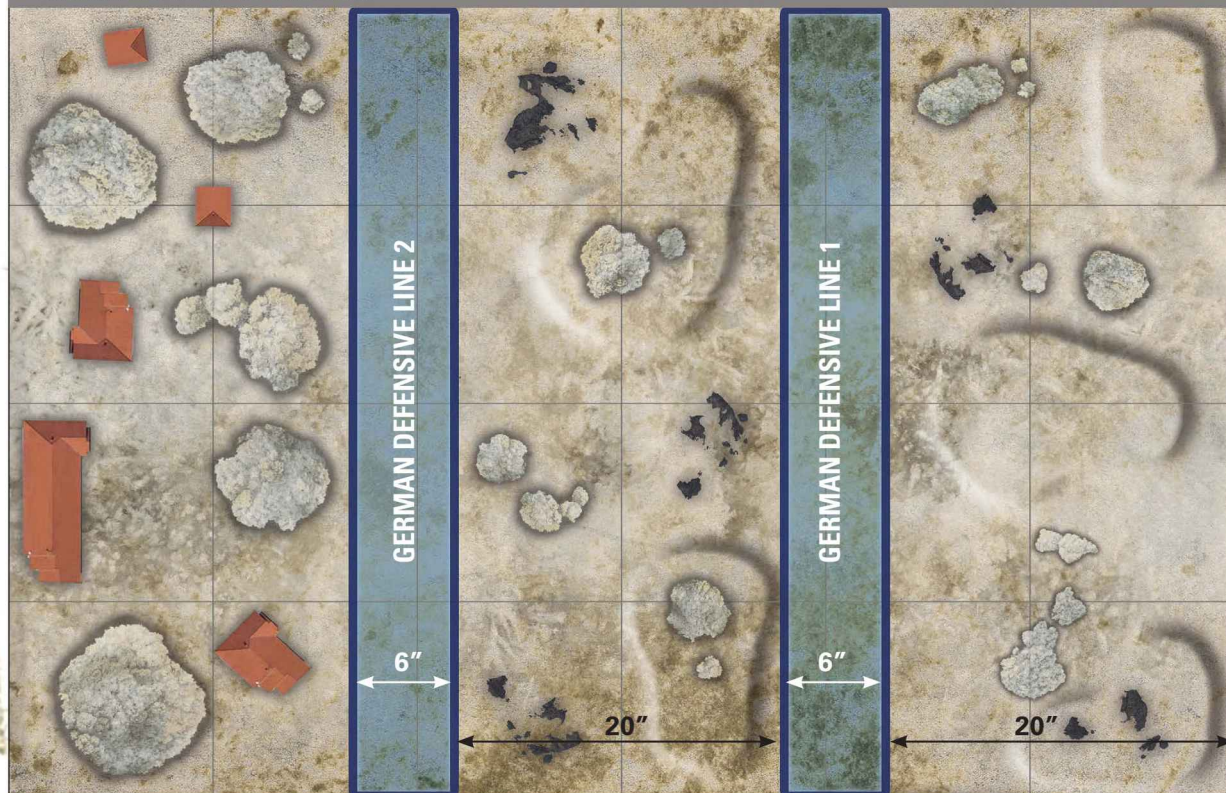
The first German defensive line starts 20" from the Soviet table edge and is 6" deep and stretches across the width of the table.

The second German defensive line starts 20" beyond the first defensive line and is also 6" deep and stretches across the width of the table.

The table should be scattered with sparse terrain such as small woods, hillocks and rocky outcrops. The last section of table between the second defence line and the German player's edge of the table should include heavier terrain including large woods and buildings.

The German player then sets up one of their bunkers and three linear obstacles in each defence line. The third

SCENARIO 11: THE SEELOW HEIGHTS



Red Army tanks struggle across marshy ground at the Seelow Heights.



bunker can be placed in either defence line. Both minefields must be placed so that they are between the first and second defence lines. They may be combined into a single minefield if desired.

The German player should carefully consider how they set up the terrain and how they place their fortifications and obstacles to make life as difficult as possible for the advancing Red Army forces. It's also worth remembering that the enemy will probably take cover behind your defences so don't place them so that they provide him with any advantage over your next line of defence.

The German player divides the number of units in their army by two. This is the number of units that must be deployed within each defence line. For example, if you have eight units then four units may be deployed in the first defence line and four units in the second defence line. If after dividing by two there are any units left over, they can be placed in either defence line or left in reserve. Defending units should use the dug-in and hidden set-up rules found in this book and the *Bolt Action* rulebook respectively (page 139 this volume and Page 131 of the rulebook).

The Red Army units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The Red Army player must nominate half of their force (rounding up) to form their first wave. The remainder may be placed in reserve. Any units in reserve cannot outflank in this scenario, and similarly units with special deployment rules, such as snipers, observers and spotters, cannot use their special deployment.

OBJECTIVE

The Red Army player must try to capture all three bunkers – the German player must try to stop them.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

Once the battle begins, the Soviet player moves their first wave onto the table during Turn 1. These units can enter the table from any point on the Soviet player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order tests are required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave. They cannot assault on the turn they enter the table.

The Seelow Heights

The nature of the Seelow Heights forced the Soviets to mount an attack up an incline that in certain areas was quite steep. Additionally, much of the ground was marshland that the Germans had made even more difficult to negotiate by deliberate flooding. The Soviet player should therefore treat all ground on the table as being

rough. For example, a Soviet infantry or vehicle unit moving across what would normally be open ground treats this as rough ground.

The Germans, on the other hand, had excellent maps of the area that included marked short cuts and routes that were not waterlogged. The German player will therefore treat all ground as open except where previously placed terrain would indicate differently.

Dawn assault

As the attack on the Seelow Heights began in the early hours of 16 April, the scenario should be played using the rules for dawn assault and reduced visibility as found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 220).

Preparatory bombardment

So concentrated was the Soviet artillery used to support this attack that the Red Army player adds +1 to their preparatory bombardment roll. This means that Soviet artillery will always have an effect. The German player better be well dug-in as it is going to get hot!

Rules for preparatory bombardments can be found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 131).

Air support

The Seelow Heights and most of the skies over Berlin were under the complete control of the Red Army's pilots. The defending German troops were constantly strafed, bombed and otherwise terrorised by the Soviet Air Force. Once per game, a Soviet forward air observer can be given a Fire order to call in an air strike. The Soviet player can add +1 to their die roll when determining the type of air attack on the warplane type chart in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 86).

GAME DURATION

Keep a note of how many turns have elapsed as the game progresses. At the end of Turn 10, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2, or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game, if the Red Army player has captured all three bunkers they win. If the Red Army player has captured two bunkers the game is a draw. If the Red Army player has captured one bunker or no bunkers then the German player wins.

All bunkers are held by the German player at the start of the game regardless of where their troops are positioned. If a bunker changes hands during the game, then it remains under the control of that side until it is taken back.

To capture a bunker there must be no enemy in it and you must move one of your infantry units inside it.

SCENARIO 12: TANK HUNTING

DESCRIPTION

Whilst large tank armies, corps and brigades had served the Red Army well during the blitzkrieg-style offensives in 1944 and early 1945, the battle for Berlin saw them need a different approach. As Soviet forces were driven into the Nazi capital by Stalin's obsession, the urban terrain became more closed and losses of tanks and other armoured vehicles began to steadily rise. If tanks were to operate in cities then friendly infantry was required to protect them from tank hunter teams. However, Soviet advance formations had simply outrun their infantry support and the assault was bogging down whilst Red Army infantry units were rushed forward. Something as simple as a well-aimed Molotov cocktail on its engine deck could destroy or immobilise even the largest tank. The introduction in large numbers of Panzerfaust portable rocket launchers had also given any German soldier a good chance of killing a tank.

Photographs of Berlin after the battle show many streets littered with the burned out hulls of T-34s and other Soviet armour. Tank formations were more often than not having to rely on their tank riders, the Tankodesantniki, to defend them.

SCENARIO

This scenario depicts a familiar Berlin scene. A Soviet tank unit has pushed forward into Berlin without adequate infantry support and now finds itself being hunted by fanatical German infantry. It must turn around and fight its way back through the dogged German defences to the safety of its own frontline.

Use the Attacker–Defender ‘Scenario 7: Envelopment’ to simulate this engagement. Any changes to the scenario rules found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook will be described below.

FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

The Soviet side should contain tanks to be hunted, so if you want lots of armour or a big game then a reinforced armoured platoon from the Tank War supplement can be used. Units should be chosen from the Berlin Theatre in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book with the following changes:

Infantry and gun units may only be taken if a motorised vehicle, e.g. truck or half-track, is chosen as a transport or tow. Each Soviet tank or self-propelled gun may embark one unit of tank riders.

GERMAN ARMY

The German forces should be taken from the Extended Last Levy Theatre Selector (page 109) with the enhanced tank killer rules. The German player is allowed to place two 6" × 6" minefields. These may be marked or not, as the German player wishes.

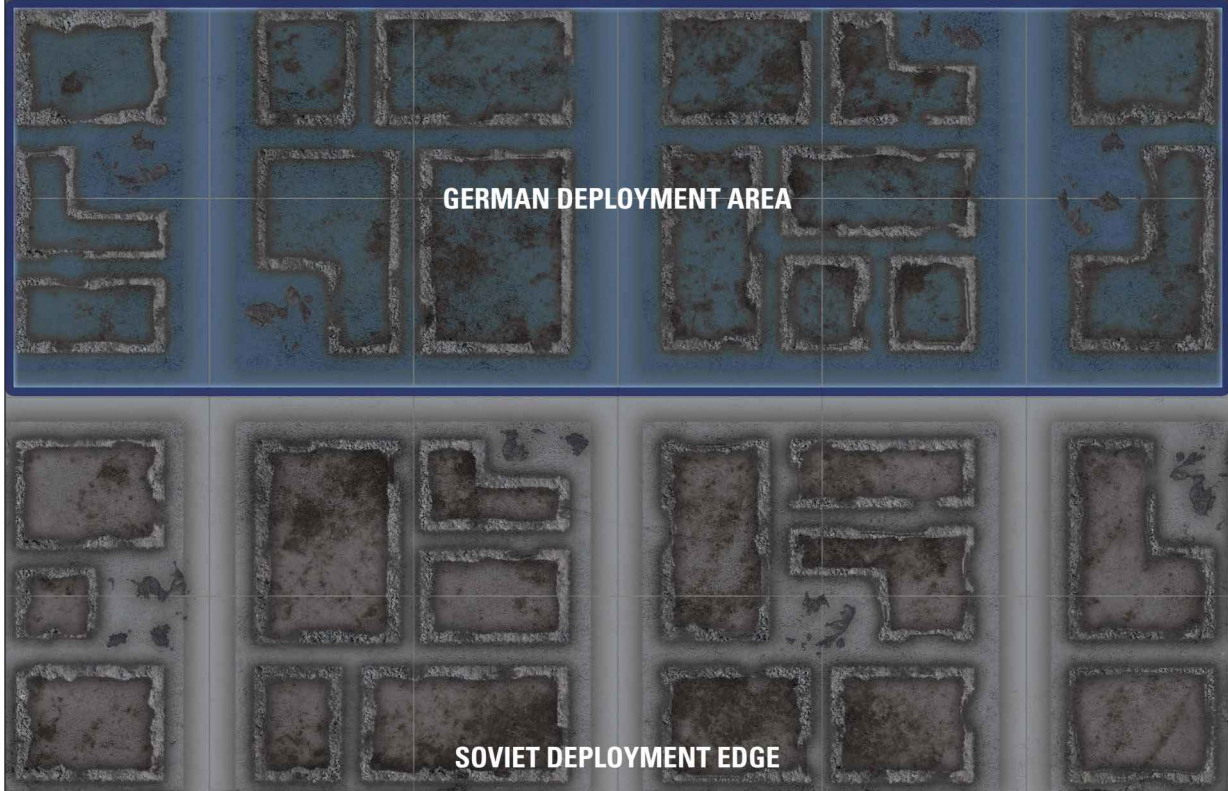
SET-UP

The game should be played on a standard 6' × 4' table as displayed in the *Bolt Action* rulebook. The table represents a built-up urban area of Berlin, so place as many buildings and ruined terrain pieces as possible. Three roads are placed on the table joining both player edges and each road should be at least 12" from another. A fourth road should then be placed joining the two short table edges. Place it as centrally as possible, splitting the board into two halves and creating three crossroads. Areas of the table other than roads should be classed as being covered in rubble. Rules for rubble can be found on page 145 of this book.

Soviet ZIS-30 Self
Propelled Gun.



Scenario 12: Tank Hunting



Soviet anti-tank gunners brew up incoming panzers.



The German player deploys at least half of their units anywhere in the defender's set-up zone. These units may begin the game dug-in and may be deployed as hidden using the hidden setup rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 131). Any remaining German units may be deployed as reserves. The Soviet units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. At least half of the units must come onto the table as the first wave.

Neither side may outflank in this scenario.

OBJECTIVE

The Soviet player is attempting to get as many units as possible through the defences of the fanatical 'Hitlerites' and off the table. The Germans will try to trap and destroy as many of the 'Bolshevik barbarians' as possible. Note that in this scenario the Soviet player is allowed to deliberately move units off the German player's table edge to achieve the objective.

SPECIAL SCENARIO RULES

Preparatory bombardment

Calling down artillery to support their escape the Soviet player rolls a die: on a 2+, a preparatory bombardment crashes into the suspected German positions.

Air support

The Red Army ruled the skies over Berlin by this point of the war and once per game a forward air observer unit may be given a Fire order to designate an enemy unit as the target of an air strike. However, as this air strike will be against units in a dense urban environment, the possibility of friendly fire incidents increases. When rolling on the air strike table apply -1 to the die roll. Results of zero and 1 will have the 'rookie pilot' effect.

Night fighting

For added interest, this scenario can be played using the night fighting scenario rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 220).

City fighting

This scenario uses the city fighting rules (page 145).

First turn

On Turn 1, the Soviet player must move their entire first wave onto the table. They can enter from any point on the Soviet player's table edge. They must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 10 roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

To determine the victor at the end of the game add up the victory points scored by each player. If one side scores at least two more victory points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is too close and it is counted a draw.

The attacker scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. He also scores 2 victory points for each of his own units that are inside defenders set up area (even only if partially), and 3 victory points for each of his own units that has moved off the enemy table edge before the end of the game.

The defender scores 2 victory points for every enemy unit destroyed.

Sd Kfz 135 Marder I



SCENARIO 13: BERLIN: CROSSING THE SPREE

DESCRIPTION

On the afternoon of 28 April, Red Army troops of the 79th Rifle Corps finally spotted the outline of the Reichstag. Although only a kilometre away, the advancing soldiers would need to cross the heavily defended Moltke Bridge over the River Spree before conducting their final assaults. The large brick and stone bridge was barricaded at either end to prevent vehicles crossing whilst its central spans were scattered with hastily constructed anti-tank obstacles and assorted rubble. On the other side the fortified buildings of the Ministry of the Interior and the Diplomatic Quarter provided the defenders with intimidating positions from which to oppose any crossing of the river. Tanks and anti-tank guns of the 11th Herman von Salza Tank Battalion dug into the Tiergarten also covered the bridge, as did the guns of the formidable Zoo flak tower. Clearly, any such crossing would result in severe casualties, and with other Soviet units advancing on the



Reichstag from other directions, caution would normally be expected. These, however, were not normal circumstances and the 79th was driven on by two overriding dictates. Firstly, Stalin had made it very clear to his theatre commanders that the flag of the Soviet Union should fly over the Reichstag no later than 1 May (which was traditionally celebrated as the Day of International Solidarity of the Workers in the Soviet Union and a highly significant date in the Soviet calendar). Secondly, there was fierce rivalry between Konev and Zhukov as to who would have the honour of being responsible for the action that would likely end the Great Patriotic War. Incessant orders sent down the chains of command to the frontline formations urged advance at any cost. Just before midnight, the 79th began its attack. To achieve surprise there was no artillery preparation. IS-2 tanks bulldozed the first barricade and the infantry stormed the bridge.

SCENARIO 13: BERLIN: CROSSING THE SPREE

GERMAN SET-UP AREA

SOVIET DEPLOYMENT EDGE



OPPOSING FORCES

SOVIET ARMY

The Soviet forces should be selected from the Berlin Theatre Selector in the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book.

GERMAN ARMY

The German forces should be selected from the Extended Last Levy Theatre Selector (page 109).

The majority of the troops actually defending the bridge were SS Polizei units.

This scenario portrays a large Red Army force attempting to drive out a numerically inferior German force.

The German player picks their force to an agreed total whilst the Soviet player may pick a force totalling three times that amount (e.g., 1,500 points if the German player chooses 500 points).

The German player also receives two bunkers, each large enough to hold a single unit of infantry. These represent the German strong points in the fortified Ministry of Information and should be placed no more than 12" from the German player's edge and no closer than 12" to each other. The German player may also place two sections of mines measuring no more than 6" x 6", one of which may be placed on the bridge. Otherwise mines may be placed at any point on their side of the river.

SET-UP

The scenario should be played out on a 5' x 3' table with the players playing along its length. A 12" x 8" bridge is placed at the exact centre of the battlefield with its open ends facing each player. A 12" wide impassable river runs under it from one long table edge to the other. The whole battlefield represents a devastated portion of central Berlin so the players should place as many building and ruin

terrain pieces as possible on the table. A road 8" wide should run the length of the table and across the bridge. Two additional roads should be placed on each player's side of the table running from one long table edge to the other. This should create one crossroads on each side of the table. So badly damaged is this area of the city that all non-road/bridge areas of the table should be assumed to be covered in rubble (see page 145).

Two objective markers are placed on the table. One is placed at each end of the bridge. Both are considered to be under German control the start of the game.

The German player deploys first anywhere on the table on the German side of the river. These units may begin the game dug-in using the rules found on page 139 of this book and may be deployed as hidden using the hidden set-up rules in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 131).

The Soviet player's units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. Up to 50% of their force is nominated as the first wave and must enter the table from the Soviet player's edge. The remaining Soviet forces may enter the game as reserves. No outflanking is allowed.

OBJECTIVE

The Soviet player is trying to gain control of both ends of the bridge to open up an assault route to the Reichstag. The German player is attempting to prevent this.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

The Soviet player goes first and may bring on their first wave of forces anywhere on the Soviet player edge by giving them Run or Advance orders. No initial order tests are required for these initial orders.

Bridge barricades

Each end of the bridge is blocked by a hastily constructed barricade 8" wide. The barricade provides hard cover for any troops and unless removed will prevent any tracked or wheeled vehicles crossing it. The barricade may be moved if a medium or heavier tank, tank destroyer or self-propelled gun is moved next to it. The player should roll a die. On a roll of 5 or 6, the barricade is completely removed from play. The die roll is modified by +1 if the vehicle is classed as Heavy and +2 if classed as Super-heavy.

Night fighting/Flare

This is a night attack and this scenario should be played as a flare scenario. Whilst the Soviets attempted to use the cover of darkness, the Germans frantically used flares to illuminate the attackers.

City fighting

This scenario uses the city fighting rules (see page 145).

Air support

This is a night scenario and no air strikes may be called in.

Preparatory bombardment

In an attempt to preserve surprise the Soviets did not perform a preparatory bombardment.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game the player holding most objectives is declared the winner. If both players hold one objective then victory is determined by who has the most victory points. The Germans gain two points for each Soviet unit destroyed and the Soviet player gains one point for each German unit destroyed.

AFTERMATH

The initial assaults of the 79th were beaten back by German defensive fire. A follow-up attack used Red Army heavy tanks to clear the barricade on the German side of the river. Although all the attacking tanks were destroyed, enough infantry were eventually able to cross the bridge to clear the German defensive line.



German Sd Kfz 234/4
armoured car

THE PRAGUE UPRISING



Czechoslovakia had been under Nazi occupation longer than any other previously independent state. Up until June 1942, resistance had been virtually non-existent. However, the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, a senior SS governor, and the harsh German retributions had reignited the flame of freedom. The German collapse in the East and the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944 encouraged the Czechs to consider an uprising in the capital Prague as the first action of throwing out the German occupiers. Unfortunately, the SS had made Prague and its environs a stronghold of their power and many observers were worried that Prague could become the site of a Nazi last stand. As Soviet and American forces rapidly approached the capital, a spontaneous revolt began after midday on 5 May.

The Radio Prague building was captured and a call to arms was transmitted. 'Calling all Czechs! Come to our aid immediately! Calling all Czechs!' The message was also transmitted in English for the benefit of the approaching American forces. A number of other key administrative buildings were occupied and many barricades were set up in the streets to prevent German forces from getting to the city centre. Unfortunately for the Czech patriots, who expected outside help, the situation was not hopeful. The Soviets had held their advance in Eastern Czechoslovakia, pinning German forces facing them in anticipation of the arrival of two other Soviet Fronts. Although Stalin ordered his forces to move on Prague when he heard news of the uprising, it would take five days for the Red Army to reach the city.

General Patton's 3rd US Army was much closer to Prague but it had been ordered to advance no further than Pilsen. On several occasions Patton requested permission to advance on Prague. However, General Eisenhower, concerned that such an action would antagonise the Soviets, refused these requests. Concerns for Prague were raised even higher when intercepted German communications revealed that the SS had been ordered to suppress the rebellion with 'exceptional brutality'. The Czech Protectorate Guard and the Police joined the uprising in the afternoon in time to face the first German probes and held their ground. The lack of weapons was an issue. Initially they were given only to ex-soldiers and members of the police. The local SS commander, surprised by the initial levels of resistance, requested that armoured forces be sent to the city immediately.

6th May saw the first attacks by the SS panzers and several barricades were smashed down. The SS appeared though to have underestimated the resolve of the defenders as infantry were driven back by small arms fire and tanks subjected to a rain of Molotov cocktails. However, by the end of the day, the uprising had been quelled in the suburbs and the remaining patriots forced into the centre of the city.

German Panther Ausf A



RUSSIAN VERSUS RUSSIAN

The prayers of the patriots were answered from an unexpected quarter with the intervention of the Russkaya osvoboditel'naya armiya ('Russian Liberation Army', or ROA). This force of primarily Russian soldiers was the brainchild of former Soviet Army officer Andrei Vlasov. The ROA was composed of Red Army POWs who had expressed no love for Stalin and the Communists. They wanted to fight against the Bolsheviks and liberate their country, even if it meant fighting alongside the Germans. With the war going decisively against the Axis this was now an impossible goal. In the interim, Vlasov was increasingly angry over the constant degrading comments and treatment from German officers and decided to switch sides. The division moved into Czechoslovakia, ignoring German orders, and intended to surrender to American forces.

On 2 May, a Czech delegation from Prague met Vlasov and requested armed help for the Prague uprising against the Germans. Vlasov, like many foreigners fighting for the Third Reich, was aware of the fate awaiting his men if they were captured. The Red Army would almost certainly arrest and execute them out of hand. As ROA's 1st Division was stationed only 30 kilometres from Prague, Vlasov reasoned that if he were to help the Czech patriots it might earn the ROA some good will from the Western Allies and perhaps enable a painless surrender into American captivity. Instructions were issued to the 1st Division's commander, Sergei Bunyachenko, ordering him to make best speed to Prague and contact the patriots. By the evening of 6 May, the ROA had camped outside the city and its officers had met with the patriot command. Perhaps the most valuable contribution they could offer were 22 tanks and a few batteries of artillery. The infantry

was also well equipped with Panzerfausts, which would prove useful against the SS armour.

On 7 May, The ROA executed their attack, taking the SS by surprise. One regiment moved to the local airport to stop the Luftwaffe intervening, whilst two others blocked the main north and south roads into Prague to prevent SS reinforcements. The final regiment joined up with the Czechs in the city centre to combat the attacking German forces.

The fight in the city centre was intense and deadly as SS infantry and tanks tried to breach the Czech barricades. The intervention of ROA tanks and the disabling of several SS armoured vehicles took the pressure off the defenders and allowed the ROA troops to attack. According to surviving records, the ROA fought with skill and bravery. At Prague airport an equally bitter struggle was taking place. ROA artillery was already ranging in on various parked ground-attack aircraft, preventing the Germans providing air support for their forces in the city. Again, the ROA triumphed and by nightfall the airport was in their hands.

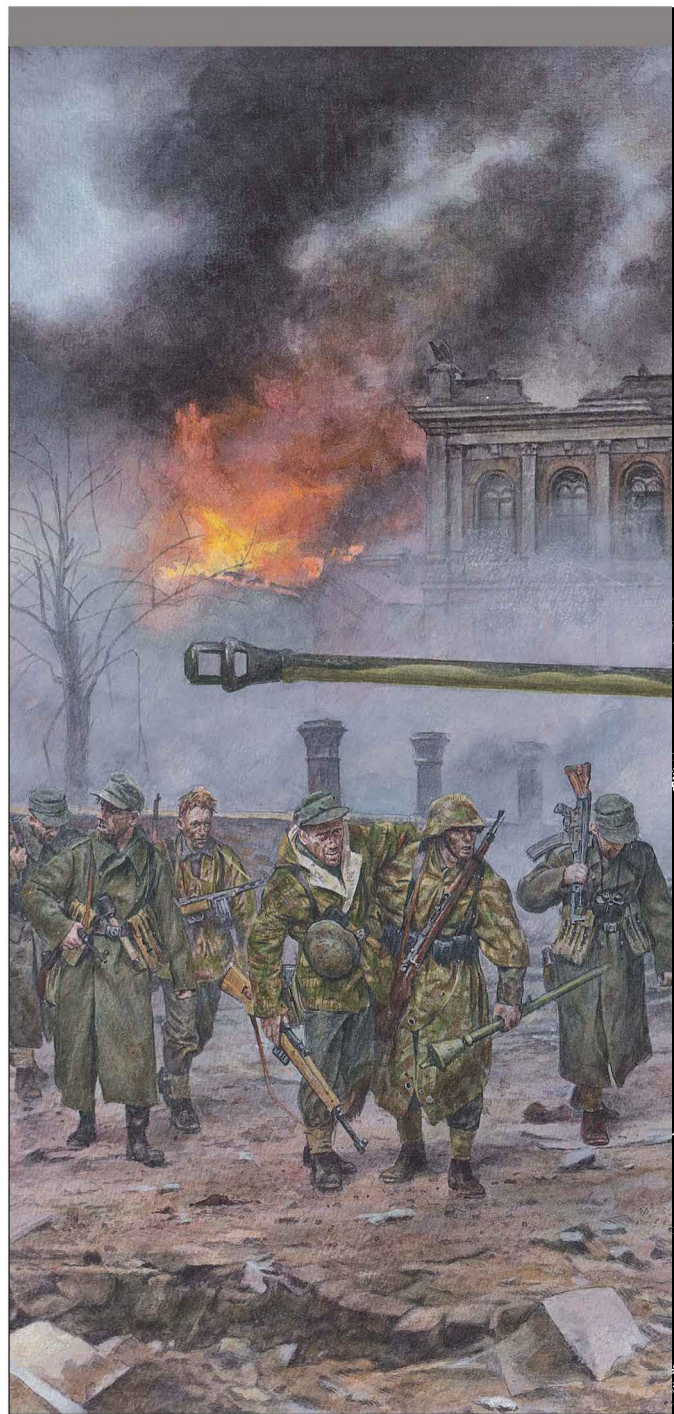
TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

By the time night fell on 7 May, the Waffen-SS forces began to pull out. ROA successes elsewhere had denied them air cover and reinforcements. The ROA had for the time being saved Prague from bloody retribution.

However, the fortunes of war were about to change for the ROA. It was becoming clear that Red Army troops would be the first to reach Prague. This caused the patriots' leadership to panic as they realised they would be held to account by Soviet authorities for working with 'anti-communist traitors'. Expressions of gratitude turned to condemnation, as committee members demanded that the ROA leave Prague. Stunned by this change in attitude, a furious but pragmatic Bunyachenko gave orders to pull out.

The last ROA troops left the city by mid-morning on 8 May with many of the patriot fighters angry and confused at the decisions of their ruling committee. This anger turned to fear as SS troops, now unopposed by the ROA, restarted their assault on the city centre. Supported by artillery and tank fire, the barricades were breached and infantry moved towards the key buildings still held by the Czech patriots. Casualties were high on both sides and, by the middle of the afternoon, the town hall was in flames. The remaining patriots resisted with fanatical zeal, conducting suicidal attacks on troops and vehicles alike. As evening approached, the end of the uprising seemed certain.

What happened next was almost miraculous. At 16:15 firing from German positions stopped and a number of officers came forward bearing a



flag of truce. They delivered a stunning message to the patriots, offering to stop the fighting if their troops received free passage from the city. The surprised Czechs were quick to agree and German troops quickly left the city, leaving their heavy weapons in the suburbs. The reason for this turnaround of



fortunes was quickly discovered when word came that leading elements of the Red Army were now rapidly approaching the city. The German troops in Prague – especially the Waffen-SS – were simply not prepared to risk capture by the Soviets and were heading west to surrender to the Americans.

In a sad postscript to the uprising, the troops of the

ROA also attempted to surrender to the Americans but were refused and driven off under fire. The post-war political ramifications of giving these anti-Bolsheviks asylum were simply too great a cost. Although a few of the 15,000 ROA troops managed to sneak past the US lines, the vast majority were captured, tried and either executed or sent to die in the Siberian labour camps.

FIGHTING THE PRAGUE UPRISING WITH *BOLT ACTION*

TERRAIN

Any scenarios set during the Prague Uprising will generally be fought over relatively dense urban terrain. Most of the combat took place in the city centre around various important government buildings. Some of these large buildings can be recreated by clustering a number of smaller buildings together forming a multi-roomed structure. As with both the Warsaw and Berlin campaigns, the local population was adept at building barricades and these should represent the majority of fortifications placed on the battlefield. The uprising started very quickly and there was little time to create more sturdy fortifications.

An interesting series of battles also took place over Prague airport where ROA forces attempted to prevent the Luftwaffe launching air strikes against the patriots defending the city centre. This battle was fought over the relatively open areas of the airport across runways and aircraft parking areas. A few aircraft scattered across the battlefield will really bring the game to life.

SCENARIOS

GENERAL SCENARIOS

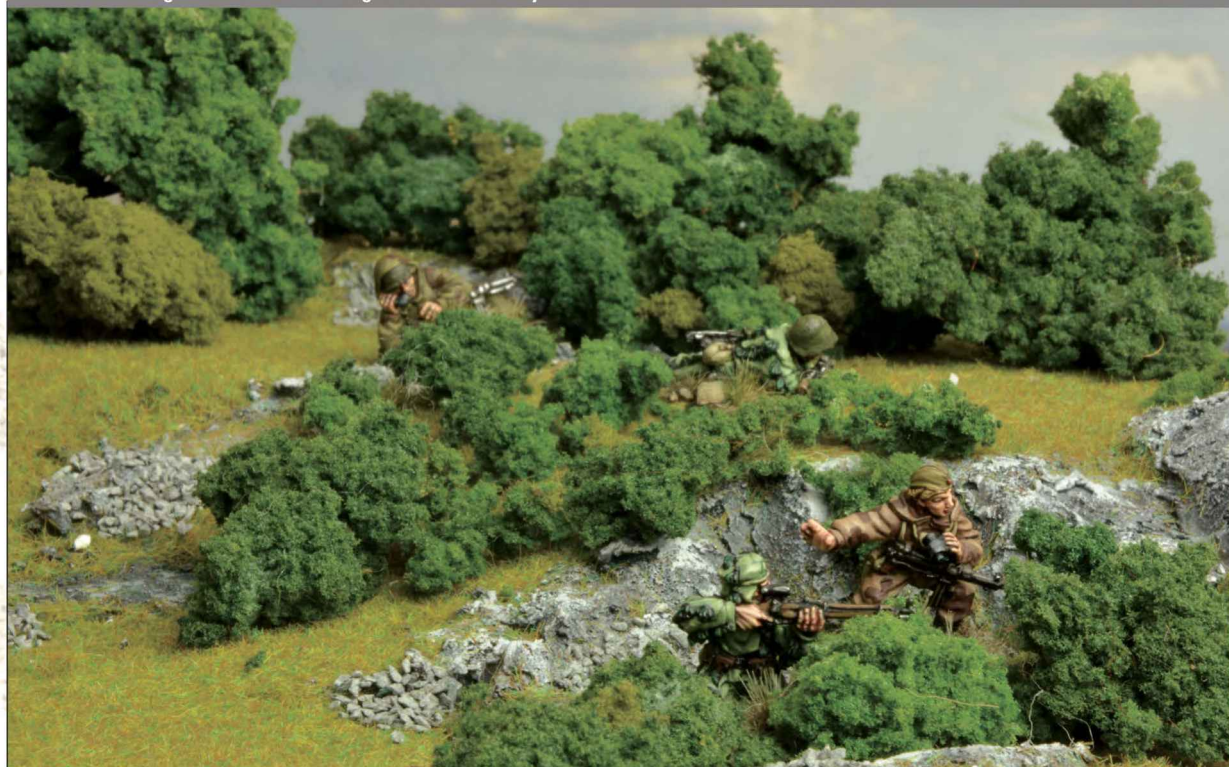
All of the scenarios in the *Bolt Action* rulebook are generally suitable for games set during the Prague Uprising.

Here are few ideas using these scenarios:

Scenario 2: Meeting Engagement: As soon as the ROA went into action in Prague rather than just reinforcing the patriot positions, they confronted the advancing Waffen-SS forces head on. After so many years of frustration at not being able to prove themselves, Vlasov's Russians were eager to confront an organisation that had clearly held them in contempt.

Scenario 3: Key Positions and Scenario 4: Double Envelopment: Both the ROA and the Waffen-SS realised that the battle of Prague would be decided by the possession of certain key buildings and other strategic objectives in the city. Both these scenarios lend themselves to simulating the struggle to break through the opponent's lines to capture and hold these objectives.

Soviet scouts gather valuable intelligence on the enemy.





Scenario 9: Point Defence: Before the arrival of the ROA, the Czech patriots found themselves struggling to hold onto their initial gains once the Waffen-SS forces began advancing. Use this scenario to recreate the desperate attempts of the patriots to defend their barricades.

Scenario 12: Sectors: Use this scenario to play out the battle for Prague airport. The whole table will represent the airfield itself. Control of the various sectors will indicate who controls the runways and other facilities either allowing or preventing the Luftwaffe to conduct air strikes over the city.

SPECIAL RULES FOR PRAGUE SCENARIOS

Air support

The German ground forces were promised Luftwaffe support from aircraft based at Prague airport.

If the German force includes a forward air observer who receives a Fire order the player may roll for an air strike.

City fight

Much of the fighting in Prague was conducted in a dense urban environment and all the special rules for city fighting apply (see page 145).

Prague barricades

The residents of Prague quickly became unwilling experts at creating temporary barricades to block their streets. These

were quickly built and did not have the permanence of the types built in Berlin and Warsaw. The barricades provide hard cover for any troops and unless removed will prevent any tracked or wheeled vehicles crossing them. A barricade may be moved if a Medium or heavier tank, tank destroyer or self-propelled gun is moved next to it. The player should roll a die. On a roll of 5 or 6, the barricade is completely removed from play. The die roll is modified by +1 if the vehicle is classed as Heavy and +2 if classed as Super-heavy. A barricade can also be removed by a successful attack from a Borgward IV or Goliath demolition vehicle.

Mistaken identity

In scenarios pitting the Waffen-SS against the ROA, both sides are using similar equipment and uniforms so any FUBAR chart roll will result in friendly fire if the die roll is 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Supply issues:

Both forces are running low on fuel and ammunition, apply the 'Supply Issues' rules (see page 15).

An unequal struggle

During the Prague Uprising the SS was able to concentrate its forces and outnumber its Czech patriot opponents. If you wish to simulate this situation in any Attacker-Defender scenarios where the Waffen-SS are the attacking force, use the special rules for 'An Unequal Struggle' (page 14).

PRAGUE SCENARIOS

The following scenario depicts an incident during the Prague Uprising:

Scenario 14: Enter the ROA

ALTERNATIVES

The Prague Uprising offers many opportunities for gaming alternative match ups.

Red Flag to Prague: Had the Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia advanced faster they might have arrived in time to aid the patriots against the Waffen-SS. Use the Berlin Theatre Selector from the *Armies of the Soviet Union* book to replace the ROA forces.

Patton's Best: The United States 3rd Army might have reached Prague first. In such circumstances, the Waffen-SS would have probably surrendered to the Americans, but the Soviets would have been far from happy. It's entirely possible that the first battle of World War III could have taken place in the streets of Prague. US forces should be selected from the 1945 Rhineland Theatre Selector in the *Armies of the United States* book. Assume no Czech patriots take part, they are keeping their heads down!

Brother Against Brother: As there was absolutely no love lost between the Soviet Union and the ROA, had these two forces actually met in or near Prague a savage battle of no quarter would have almost certainly occurred. Both sides should be given the fanatics rule as it is likely that no prisoners would have been taken.

THE ROA

In late 1944 the German army created its own Russian formations as the Russkaya osvoboditel'naya armiya ('Russian Liberation Army' or ROA). Driving this initiative was General A.A. Vlasov. Vlasov had been a commander of the pre-war Soviet army and had commanded the 2nd Shock Army on the Volkhov Front in 1942. The 2nd suffered encirclement following Stalin's 'No retreat' orders and Vlasov and thousands of his men were taken prisoner. Disgusted by the way he felt his men had been sacrificed, he suggested to his captors that he might be able to recruit an anti-Soviet military force

drawn entirely from Russian POWs. It is estimated that by 1944 over 800,000 Russian volunteers were serving the German armed forces in various non-combatant roles. Vlasov's dream was to turn them into a real combat formation that could fight against the Soviets side by side with German allies. In November 1944 he finally got his way and was given permission to create the ROA. Its first division was formed in November 1944 and put under the command of Major General Sergei Bunyachenko, another disillusioned ex-Soviet officer. Sometimes referred to as the 1st Division ROA, it was known to the Germans as the 600th Infantry Division (Russ). Their uniform was cut in a similar manner to the Red Army's but in field grey with distinctive ROA patches on the sleeves. Their small arms were a mix of German and captured Soviet weapons whilst many of their heavy weapons were older German models. An ROA armoured detachment was also formed comprised of captured T-34/76, SU-85 and SU-76 armoured vehicles plus a number of BA-10 armoured cars withdrawn from Warsaw after the AK Uprising.

In February 1945, the 1st Division was deployed to the Oder Front and took part in some of the last engagements of the Vistula-Oder offensive. Here it came into possession of ten Panzerjäger 38(t) Hetzers, greatly improving its armoured firepower. However, after regular German formations had failed to eliminate a Soviet bridgehead at Frankfurt-on-Oder, they were ordered to attack Soviet positions across open ground where the Red Army had unimpeded fields of fire. Predictably, the 1st Division's assault was thrown back with heavy casualties. At this juncture, Vlasov and Bunyachenko became convinced that their so-called allies saw them as simple cannon-fodder and disposable. Taking advantage of the general chaos on the Oder Front, the ROA quietly slipped back through Germany and into Czechoslovakia. Aware that the war was coming to a close and knowing the consequences of capture by the Red Army, the ROA planned to give itself up to the Americans. However, fate had other plans and the ROA was in the right place and the right time when the citizens of Prague decided to throw off the Nazi yoke.

Volksgrenadiers



ROA THEATRE SELECTOR

A Czech/ROA force must comprise one or more reinforced platoons picked from the following Theatre Selector. Each reinforced platoon is made up as follows:

- 1 Lieutenant (First or Second)
- 2 infantry squads: Heer Grenadiers

Headquarters

- 0–1 Captain or Major
- 0–1 Medic team
- 0–1 Forward observer

Infantry

- 0–4 Infantry squads: Heer Grenadiers, Ostruppen, Czech Patriot squad
- 0–2 MMG teams
- 0–1 Mortar team: Light, medium or heavy
- 0–1 Sniper team
- 0–1 Flamethrower team

ADDITIONAL UNITS

CZECH PATRIOT SQUAD

After six years of harsh Nazi rule the ordinary citizens of Prague are ready to rise against their oppressors. A mixture of activists and members of the paramilitary, they cannot

Artillery

- 0–1 gun from:
 - Anti-tank gun: PaK 38, PaK 40
 - Artillery gun: Light, medium or heavy
 - Anti-aircraft gun: Flak 38, Flakvierling 38

Armoured car

- 0–1 Armoured car or recce vehicle from: SdKfz 222, BA-10 (Soviet)

Tanks, Tank destroyers, Assault guns, Self-propelled artillery and Anti-aircraft vehicles

- 0–1 from: T-34/76, SU-85, SU-76, Jagdpanzer 38(t) Hetzer, Opel Blitz with Flak 38, SdKfz 7/2

Transports and Tows

- 0–1 Transport vehicle per infantry unit in the reinforced platoon from: Truck, Maultier, Kubelwagen
- 0–1 Tow from: Truck, Horse-drawn limber

ROA SPECIAL RULES

Fanatics: If ROA forces are fighting Soviet forces in a scenario, all ROA units should become Fanatics.

be expected to stand up to regular combat troops but will sell themselves dearly in the cause of a free Czechoslovakia.

Cost	70pts (Inexperienced)
Composition	1 NCO and 9 men
Weapons	Rifles
Options	- Add up to 10 additional militia with rifles for +7pts each - Up to 1 man can have a Panzerfaust for +5pts - Equip all men with anti-tank grenades for +2pts per model
Special Rules	- Green - Gain tank hunter trait if all models are armed with anti-tank grenades

SCENARIO 14: THE PRAGUE UPRISING: ENTER THE ROA

DESCRIPTION

After their assault against the Czech patriots on the streets of Prague on 5 May, Waffen-SS infantry and tanks from the 2nd SS Panzer Division 'Das Reich' gathered themselves for a final assault the following morning. It was believed that the insurgents had used up much of their ammunition foiling the first attacks and that they would be unable to mount a determined defence. In addition, local Luftwaffe units based at Prague airport had been made available to the local commander and a number of air strikes with incendiary bombs were planned throughout the day.

By mid-morning, panzers supported by infantry were moving down the main streets towards the remaining defiant barricades. The first sign that something was amiss for the Waffen-SS command staff was the absence of the expected Luftwaffe air strikes. Contact with the airport was difficult, with indications that some sort of ground attack was underway. Even more perturbing were reports that armoured vehicles had been spotted taking up

defensive positions behind the barricades. When identified as T-34s, confusion spread amongst the Waffen-SS troops as rumours began that the Red Army had already arrived. It was only when the leading SS vehicles were destroyed by a number of Hetzer tank destroyers that the reality sank in. German forces were being attacked by their erstwhile allies, General Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army.

The ROA immediately went on the offensive against the bemused German troops, who initially fell back in confusion. Brutal hand-to-hand fighting broke out as ROA troops tangled with German infantry for control of a number of important Czech government buildings. Emboldened by the ROA's appearance, many Czech patriots joined the fray harassing the occupiers with rifle fire and taking the occasional pot shot with a captured Panzerfaust. In the streets, the ROA's rag-tag force of armoured vehicles traded shot for shot with the German armour – with both sides taking casualties. The fate of Prague was now in the balance.

This scenario pits the forces of the ROA and the Czech patriots against units of the Waffen-SS and SS Polizei in a battle for the control of strategic buildings in the centre of Prague.

Depending on whether you wish to play a small skirmish or larger combined arms operation either Bolt Action reinforced platoons or Tank War armoured platoons may be chosen.

OPPOSING FORCES CZECH LIBERATION FORCES

ROA and Czech Forces are chosen using the ROA force selector found in this book on page 133.

GERMAN ARMY

SS occupation forces should be selected from the 1945 – Operation Spring Awakening Theatre Selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

For this scenario, use a 4' × 4' table. Two roads should be placed on the

SCENARIO 14: THE PRAGUE UPRISING: ENTER THE ROA

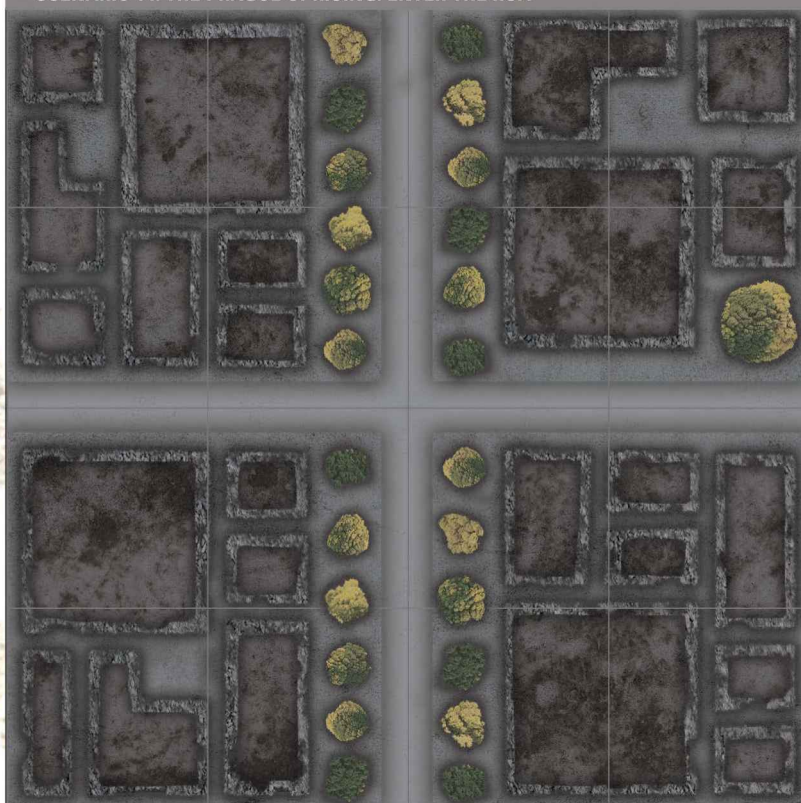


table in such a way that the roads intersect at the very centre of the table forming a crossroads.

Four large buildings should then be placed within 12" of the crossroads, but no building should be placed within 12" of another. These represent the important 'government buildings' and media outlets such as Radio Prague.

A high density of buildings, ruins and rubble should cover the rest of the table. Some small areas of trees or patches of grass can represent the city parks.

OBJECTIVE

Place one objective marker in each 'government building'.

Once the objectives are placed, both players roll a die and the highest roller gets to choose which table edge to start on. The other player will start on the opposite table edge.

The ROA player may now place four barricades 6" wide and 1" deep anywhere up to 12" from the table centre. Finally the ROA player may select one ten-man Czech Partisan unit and place it on the table within 12" of the table centre. They can be placed in buildings. The ROA player does not have to pay points for this unit.

Both players can leave up to 50% of their units (rounding down) as reserves. The remainder represent the first wave and will move onto the table on Turn 1. Reserves for both sides can perform an outflanking manoeuvre.

Rules for reserves and outflanking can be found in the *Bolt Action* rulebook (page 132).

CZECH PARTISAN UNIT

Composition	1 NCO and 9 men
Weapons	NCO with Pistol, 8 men with Rifles and one man with Panzerfaust. All armed with anti-tank grenades
Special Rules	- Green - Tank Hunter

OBJECTIVE

Both the German and the ROA forces are attempting to capture as many building objectives as possible as they battle for control of Prague.

SPECIAL RULES

First turn

During Turn 1 both players must bring their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on their side's table edge, and must be given a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.



Barricades

The barricades provide hard cover for any troops and unless removed will prevent any tracked or wheeled vehicles crossing them. A barricade may be moved if a Medium or heavier tank, tank destroyer or self-propelled gun is moved next to it. The player should roll a die. On a roll of 5 or 6 the barricade is completely removed from play. The die roll is modified by +1 if the vehicle is classed as Heavy and +2 if classed as Super-heavy. A barricade can also be removed by a successful attack from a Borgward IV or Goliath demolition vehicle.

Forward air observers

The German ground forces were promised Luftwaffe support from aircraft based at Prague airport.

If the German force includes a forward air observer who receives a Fire order, the player may roll for an air strike.

City fighting

This scenario uses the city fighting rules (page 145).

Mistaken identity

As both sides in this scenario are using similar equipment and uniforms, any FUBAR chart roll will result in friendly fire if the die roll is 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Supply issues

Both forces are running low on fuel and ammunition, so apply the 'Supply Issues' special rules (page 15).

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many game turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of Turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3 the game ends, on a roll of 4, 5 or 6 play one further turn.

VICTORY

At the end of the game if you hold more building objectives than your opponent you win; otherwise, the game is a draw. To hold a building objective at the end of the game, there must be a model from one of your infantry units inside the building.

APPENDICES: ADDITIONAL SPECIAL RULES



SNOW, MUD, ICE AND FROSTBITE

A defining feature of the war in the East was the powerful effect of the seasons on the combatants. During the summer, heat, thirst and dust were additional enemies to be fought; during spring and autumn, nature's foes became the torrential rain and subsequent clinging mud. Harshes of all was the winter, when ice, snow and frostbite conspired to disable men and machines at a frightening rate. The bitter cold alone could inflict terrible casualties on ill-prepared troops caught in the grip of the harsh Russian winter. During the Winter War in Finland, Red Army frostbite casualties exceeded 10% and the Axis suffered equally in the drive on Moscow in 1941. The following additional rules reflect the additional effects of winter conditions.

SNOW

Thick, heavy snowfalls are commonplace in continental Russia. In the depths of winter, special precautions had to be taken to ensure that roads did not vanish entirely underneath drifting snow and travelling off-road was virtually impossible except by soldiers on foot (at great effort) or tracked vehicles.

In rules terms, areas of snow are treated as rough ground. This means that infantry and tracked vehicles are limited to making advance moves in snow, while artillery and wheeled vehicles may not move in it at all. Soviet tanks featured notably wider tracks than their opponents to assist with moving in snow and are not subject to this rule. Likewise ski-troops and aerosans rely on snowy conditions so treat areas of snow as open ground for movement purposes.

MUD

The autumn rains and the spring meltdown of the winter snows created vast quagmires of deep mud on the Eastern Front, and the roads were normally no more than dirt tracks, which turned into near-unusable rivers of mud as the advancing columns trod onto them with increasing difficulty before getting completely bogged down. Infantry and tracked vehicles could deal better with the mud (at least in the short timescale represented by a Bolt Action

engagement), but wheeled vehicles really struggled. Areas of mud are normally treated as difficult ground in Bolt Action. However, if you like to add an element of randomness similar to the one we used for ice, you can agree with your opponent to use the rules below for vehicles and artillery units moving across areas of mud – vehicles and artillery units treat mud as open ground, but any such unit whose movement is going to cross a section of mud must declare their intended move and then roll on the deep mud table the moment they start moving onto the mud.

DEEP MUD TABLE	
DIE ROLL	RESULT
0	Buried deep: The unit cannot move for the rest of the game.
1-2	Bogged down: The unit has to stop, losing grip on the ground. The unit moves into the mud and then immediately stops (or does not move at all if it started the move in mud). The unit also suffers an extra -1 modifier to this roll the next time it moves.
3-4	Struggle: The efforts to cross this section of mud are very troublesome for your vehicle's traction. Vehicles continue with their move normally, but can only move through a maximum of 6" of mud as part of their move, after which they must stop. The same goes for artillery units, except that they can move only up to 2".
5-6	Fairly solid going: This area was not as deep and soft as you thought. The unit continues with its move normally.

DEEP MUD MODIFIERS	
Fully tracked vehicle	+1
Half-track	0
Wheeled vehicle, artillery	-1

ICE

The extremely low temperatures of the Russian winter meant tanks and men could usually move across frozen lakes and waterways with little risk – 3" thickness of ice is sufficient to bear a man's weight, while 10" thickness will support up to seven tons – so iced-over water features are simply treated as open ground. However, the gamer in us all will say, 'Where's the fun in that?' So, if you want to

have a little more randomness in your battles, any units whose movement is going to cross a section of ice must declare their intended move and then roll on the thin ice table the moment they start moving onto the ice.



THIN ICE TABLE

DIE ROLL	RESULT
0	Splash: The ice breaks and dumps the unit into the frigid waters beneath. Remove the entire unit as casualties – any individuals that manage to struggle out of the water will be in no state to continue fighting in sub-zero temperatures.
1-2	Creeeeeeaaaaakkk: The unit has to stop as the ice starts to crack visibly beneath them. Roll another die to determine how far the unit actually moves (slides) on the ice before it stops. The unit still has to roll on the thin ice table next time it moves and suffers an extra -1 modifier to the roll.
3-4	Seems safe enough: The unit has no problems moving on this occasion although it and any units following it might not be so lucky next time. The unit continues with its move normally, but units still have to roll on the thin ice table when crossing this part of the ice.
5-6	Solid as a rock: The ice is thick enough to take any amount of traffic along the route the unit has followed. The unit continues with its move normally. In addition, no more thin ice rolls have to be made for other units following this exact same route.

THIN ICE MODIFIERS

Heavy or Super-heavy tank	-3
Armoured car/carrier, Light or Medium tank	-2
Artillery piece or soft-skin vehicle	-1
Infantry making a Run move	-1
Small team	+1
Ski troops	+2

HE AND FLAMETHROWER WEAPONS ON ICE

Luring an incautious enemy onto thin ice is an Eastern tradition that dates back beyond the 'Battle of the Ice' on Lake Peipus in 1242 AD, when retreating Teutonic knights met with a cold and watery demise at the hands of the army of Alexander Nevsky. There can be little doubt that coming under fire while on the ice would be a horrific experience. HE and flamethrower weapons will, naturally enough, be particularly effective against units on ice. To

represent this the attacker can re-roll the dice for the number of hits scored against units on ice that are struck by HE weapons and flamethrowers of all kinds.

FROSTBITE

In scenarios where the frostbite rule applies, affected units must take a morale check at the beginning of the game. If the test is failed, each point by which it is failed indicates the loss of one soldier or crewman from the unit in the case of infantry or artillery, or immobilisation in the case

of vehicles. If a vehicle is immobilised by frostbite while not on the table (including outflanking), it's considered destroyed – its passengers can arrive on the table on foot, but suffer an additional -1 to their test for coming onto the table (when such test is needed).



DUG-IN: FOXHOLES, TRENCHES AND GUN PITS

Every professional army since the Romans has understood the importance of digging in whenever time and terrain permit it. By the twentieth century, soldiers were routinely equipped with entrenching tools so that they could 'disappear' into the ground as fast as humanly possible. The simple truth was that a soldier hiding in a hole was massively harder to kill with bullets, explosives or shrapnel than a soldier out in the open.

In every theatre with suitable terrain, all sides used gun pits, foxholes and trenches to defend their ground. In Bolt Action terms, this means that defending units set up on the tabletop at the beginning of the game can have the advantages of dug-in positions. Dug-in positions work a lot like the hidden set-up rules in that regard, but in the case of dug-in positions the bonuses continue to function during combat.

DUG-IN RULES

Where indicated in the scenario, units can be dug-in at the start of the game (for scenarios where it is not specifically mentioned as a rule of thumb a unit that can use hidden set-up is allowed to be dug-in). These units must be deployed on the tabletop at the start of the scenario and may be subject to the hidden set-up rules as well. Dug-in units are still placed on the table in the usual way, and must be marked in some fashion to show that they are hidden – any distinct token or marker will do.

A dug-in unit counts as Down when shot at, even if it's not Down (additional -1 to be hit and the number of hits from HE is halved rounding down). If the unit does go Down while dug-in, the benefits of being Down are doubled (i.e., -2 to be hit and only one-quarter damage from HE). Being dug-in offers no additional protection or benefit against enemy assaults (although tank assaults are an exception, see below).



German Heer PaK40
anti-tank gun team



Units count as dug-in until they're ordered to Advance or Run. If possible, mark the locations of vacated foxholes, gun pits and trenches so that they can be re-occupied or captured by the enemy later. Card counters, plasticine or piles of small stones can be used as makeshift solution, although gorgeous modelling solutions made with foamcore, clay or similar materials are preferred of course!

DUG-IN VEHICLES

On the defensive it was common practice to dig-in tanks as well as men, albeit considerably more digging was required! While the tank sacrifices its mobility, it gains protection by reducing its target size and not having its more vulnerable treads and hull exposed to enemy fire.

Dug-in vehicles count as being in hard cover to attackers and count 'immobilised' damage results as 'crew stunned' instead. Dug-in vehicles may not move during the game.

DUG-IN WITH HIDDEN SET-UP

A unit can be both dug-in and use hidden set-up, providing it satisfies the deployment restrictions for both – in this case it is assumed the dug-in unit has had the time and opportunity to properly camouflage its positions.

The hidden set-up rules take precedence until they no longer apply; the dug-in unit does gain the additional protection of counting as Down against HE fire while hidden. Once hidden set-up rules no longer apply to the unit for any reason, the dug-in rules apply instead.

DUG-IN VERSUS PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

In scenarios which use the preparatory

bombardment rules (see the *Bolt Action* rulebook page 131), being dug-in doesn't modify the effects of the bombardment. It's assumed that units are already taking cover as best they can from the bombardment and that in the event of a direct hit being dug-in won't offer any additional protection from a heavy calibre shell, bomb or rocket.

DUG-IN VERSUS TANK ASSAULT

A foxhole or trench would give protection for a few moments, but if a tank actually stopped on it – or stopped on it and twisted on its tracks a few times 'like a man crushing out a cigarette' (to quote one observer) – the hole would collapse with messy results for the unfortunate occupant.

Models from dug-in units automatically pass their morale check and are not moved aside when assaulted by a tank, as they simply duck down in their entrenchment and allow the tank to pass overhead. However, if a tank ends its assault movement on top of any dug-in models, those models are removed as casualties and the unit must take the morale check for tank assault as normal.

DIGGING-IN DURING A GAME

We do not normally allow troops to dig-in during the course of a game, but if both players agree, troops can be allowed to dig-in during a game if they are given a Down order. Make an order test for the unit at the end of the turn, if the unit succeeds and remains on a Down order in the same spot until the end of the next turn, it will count as dug-in at their current positions in the end phase of that turn.

As this can slow down the game and makes some scenarios harder for one side to win, we present it as an optional rule for experienced players rather than as a general rule of play.



MINEFIELDS

Minefields became a major factor in the Great Patriotic War. Anywhere that the battle lines began to stabilise or major defences were sited quickly sprouted its own crop of mines, while retreating troops left veritable devil's gardens of booby traps and mines in their wake. Behind the lines, partisans used mines to make travelling on any road by night a potentially risky prospect. Detection was no simple matter either. The Red Army had a great fondness for wooden 'cigar box' mines, and old battlefields being fought over often contained such a wealth of shrapnel and scrap metal that mine detectors were useless.

As the war went on, both sides honed their skills with mines to new levels of frightfulness. At Kursk, for example, the Soviets laid a million mines during the spring so that their tripwires and pressure plates were completely hidden by vegetation in summer. During the battle they also had special 'mobile obstacle detachments' dedicated to laying fresh minefields overnight in the predicted directions of advance the German panzers would take the next day. For their part German pioneers 'subverted' minefields by moving mines onto paths the Soviets had left clear for themselves.



MINEFIELD RULES

Players can decide to add minefields to any of their games, as long as they agree beforehand. Usually the defender in a scenario can deploy mines, since attackers are pushing into a new area and have not had the opportunity.

Initially, we are going to provide rules for visible, marked minefields, as we assume that both sides are adhering to the Geneva Convention and marking their minefields. We shall also deal by default with anti-personnel mines, as they are the most common. Later on we'll also provide rules for anti-tank, mixed, dummy and concealed minefields.

MINEFIELD SECTIONS

The default minefield section in Bolt Action is a 6"-sided square area. Larger minefields can be made by placing several of these sections next to each other.

Normally, we tend to allow the defender in a scenario two minefield sections per full 1000 points of their force.

Or if you prefer you can allow a certain amount of points to be spent on minefields (up to 10% of the force total), and say that each section costs 50pts.

A minefield section can either be a cardboard base appropriately decorated, much like an area of rough ground, or can be delimited ad hoc before a game using four 6" long obstacles (like a 6" length of barbed wire), or even simply using four counters set up at 6" distance to mark the corners of the minefield.

EFFECT OF MINEFIELDS

When any unit (friend or foe) moves into a minefield section, the opponent can interrupt their movement once at any point during their move, just as if the minefield itself was in Ambush. When the opponent declares that the minefield is 'attacking' the unit, the controlling player must halt at that point and note how much movement the unit has left. Assuming the unit survives its encounter with the minefield, it will finish its move as normal.

After the unit has been positioned at its ambush point, the opponent rolls one die to see if the unit triggers a mine, effectively rolling to hit the unit with the minefield section itself. A minefield section needs a 3+ to hit an Inexperienced unit, 4+ for a Regular unit, and 5+ for a Veteran unit.

Units belonging to the player that placed the minefield are supposed to know the location of the mines, so they can force the opponent to re-roll any successful hit, as long as they are moving at an Advance. Also, units of combat engineers (engineers, pioneers, etc.) are trained to deal with these obstacles and always benefit from this re-roll when moving at an Advance, even when crossing the enemy's minefields.

If any unit (including friends and engineers) is sufficiently foolhardy to cross a minefield at a Run, the minefield rolls three dice when ambushing the unit rather than one!

If the minefield misses with all of its dice, the unit has not triggered a mine and can finish its move normally. If the minefield scores hits, then each successful hit is resolved with a penetration value of +2 against non-armoured targets and +3 against armoured targets (damage roll of 7+). Roll to damage as normal. A unit that is hit also suffers D3 pin makers rather than just one. Note that the higher value Pen against armoured targets reflects the fact that the anti-personnel mine hits the weakly armoured belly of the vehicle – not normally considered from the point of view of other hits.

If the unit is not destroyed, or broken by a resulting

morale check, it can finish its move as normal.

Note that a single minefield section can attack a unit only once per move, but can attack any number of units moving over it during the turn. Also, if a unit was foolish enough to cross two (or more!) minefield sections as part of the same move, each section can ambush it in turn.

ANTI-TANK MINEFIELDS

At the beginning of the game, you may secretly write down that any of your minefields is an anti-tank minefield. Anti-tank minefields only affect vehicles, and are ignored by infantry and artillery units that move over them. However, hits inflicted on vehicles are at +5 Pen rather than the normal +2.

MIXED MINEFIELDS

You can also create a mixed minefield section by 'using up' two of your sections. So, if for example you were allowed two sections in the scenario being played, you can lay both out as anti-tank or anti-personnel minefields, or deploy a single, mixed minefield. Make a note of which minefields are mixed.

A mixed minefield section combines the best of both worlds and will affect infantry and artillery with +2 Pen hits, but vehicles with +5 Pen hits.

FLAMETHROWER MINES

The Red Army employed two types of 'static explosive flamethrowers', the FOG-1 and FOG-2, which for all practical purposes worked as mines. They were successful enough that Germans made a direct copy of the FOG-1 called the Abwehrflammenwerfer 42 for their own use.

In game terms, flamethrower mines work the same way as anti-personnel mines, but a unit that triggers a flamethrower mine section must also check morale regardless of the casualties inflicted. Vehicles that are hit but not penetrated by a flamethrower mine roll another die, on a result of 6 they are 'on fire' as described on the damage results table on page 87 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Flamethrower mines cost two normal minefield sections to deploy, just like mixed minefields.

DUMMY MINEFIELDS

You can replace any real minefield section allowed by the scenario with two dummy minefield sections. For example, if you are allowed two sections, you can place four down. Make a note of which sections are dummies. Your opponent might notice this variation in the number of allowed minefields, in which case they'll know some minefields are dummies, but of course they won't know which ones!

When units enter a dummy minefield, roll to ambush them as normal (including any re-rolls that the opponent

may force upon you). If you score a hit, however, you have to reveal the minefield is just a dummy, and from now on it counts as a cleared minefield section (see below), as a few mines were often left even in dummy minefields.

MINEFIELDS IN WATER

As mines in shallow and deep water are intended solely to destroy boats and amphibious vehicles, you cannot place anti-personnel minefields in water terrain (shallow or deep), but you can place anti-tank minefields, or dummy ones, in either type of water terrain (see rules for movement in water on page 31 of *Battleground Europe*).

CONCEALED MINEFIELDS

Instead of visibly deploying your minefields sections, you may halve the number of sections available and deploy them hidden without any markings. We cannot condone and do not encourage the use of this despicable practice, which is against the Geneva Convention!

Make an accurate note of where the minefield sections are. You can either use coordinates and/or make a map of the table as you wish. You cannot place hidden minefields in the enemy's set-up zone.

During the game, when a unit moves into the minefield, you must reveal it (the unit has spotted that something is amiss) and place it on the table, and then proceed to ambush the unit as normal.

CLEARING MINEFIELDS

Once a minefield section has scored one or more hits on a unit passing over it, the opposing player rolls a die. On the roll of a 6, the minefield is cleared. If the unit that was hit was a vehicle with damage value 8 or more, the minefield is instead cleared on a 4+. This represents any subsequent troops either following in the tracks of the first or moving over craters left by previously exploded mines.

A cleared minefield is left in place, but from that point onwards the minefield only ever scores hits on a 6, regardless of the quality of the troops crossing it, and always rolls a single die 'to hit', even against units moving at a Run. Re-rolls for friends and engineers still apply. This represents hurried mine clearance under fire, which is not exactly a thorough process, and might definitely leave a few isolated mines behind.

Thankfully, there are alternative means of clearing a minefield other than walking your infantry or driving your tanks over it. These are listed below with their rules.

MANUAL MINE CLEARANCE BY INFANTRY

Any infantry unit that has at least five models inside a minefield can be ordered to attempt to clear it using their bayonets. The unit must be given a special 'mine clearing'

order, which is the same as giving the unit a Down order – place a Down marker next to the unit and then make a ‘mine clearing roll’ applying all of the modifiers below. In order to clear the minefield section, the result needs to be a 6 after modifications. Note that a natural 6 is always a success and a natural 1 is always a failure. In addition, if a natural 1 is rolled, the minefield section ambushes the unit as normal (and in this case, an anti-tank minefield does affect the tampering infantry!).

MINE CLEARING MODIFIERS (CUMULATIVE)

Veterans	+1
Inexperienced	-1
Engineers	+1
Mine-clearing gear*	+2
Per pin marker on unit	-1

*Any engineer unit may be equipped before the game with mine-clearing gear (Bangalore Torpedoes, mine detectors,

etc.) at a cost of +1pt per model. At least one of the models should show this upgrade.

BLOWING IT UP!

Any weapon capable of indirect fire can target a visible minefield section. Aim for the centre point of the section and roll to hit as normal (including ranging in for successive shots). If a hit is scored, roll for the HE value of the weapon – if you score at least six hits on the minefield with a single shot, the minefield section is cleared.

When resolving an artillery barrage ‘Fire for effect’ result, roll a die for each minefield section within range of the barrage (including concealed ones!). If you roll a 6, the minefield section is hit by a heavy howitzer as normal, and if you score at least six hits on it, it is cleared.

When firing a preparatory bombardment, roll a die for each minefield section in the defender’s set-up zone (including concealed ones!). If you roll a 6 that minefield section is cleared.

Even the most powerful of tanks are vulnerable in the close confines of urban fighting.





CITY FIGHTING

The Eastern Front was marked by some of the most vicious city battles of the war. Of them all, Stalingrad is undoubtedly the most infamous, because the very heart of that city became a battleground for many months and the German Heer suffered its first catastrophic defeat there with the complete loss of Paulus's 6th Army. However, there were many other cities that became battlegrounds in the East; Kharkov, Kiev, Sevastopol, Odessa, Voronezh, Vilnius, Warsaw, Königsberg, Budapest and finally Berlin, to name but a few. Leningrad was besieged for almost three years and the fighting in its suburbs was a constant during that time. All of these places were torn apart by ferocious fighting and if the duration of the battles were shorter in some places than others the fighting was certainly no less intense.

Fighting in built-up areas brings a perplexing set of extra challenges to unit commanders. Buildings, even ones reduced to rubble, make superb fighting positions for defenders while attackers must contend with moving through open streets to advance. The confusing landscape of ruins and rubble was easy to get lost in and squads often found themselves pinned down or cut off with little idea of where friends and enemies might be. Even gaining entry to a defended building could be a miniature battle of its own with fighting room-to-room and floor-to-floor using grenades, bullets and close combat to dislodge the defenders.

The city fighting rules are intended to supplement the rules for buildings in the *Bolt Action* rulebook by laying out a number of additional challenges.

THE CITY AS A BATTLEFIELD

The kind of terrain pieces you have available to make up your city battlefield will dictate a lot about how it all fits together in terms of the rules. Some players like to construct modular boards with built-in ruins, buildings and other features. Others have baseboards with features – particularly ‘sunk-in’ ones – like streets and canals, but with separate buildings that can be removed for ease of transport and storage. The third approach is the simplest one – as many buildings and ruins as possible placed on a suitably coloured/textured mat.

For the purposes of city fighting the terrain on the tabletop counts as one of four types:

- Rubble
- Buildings
- Roads
- Open ground

RUBBLE

When buildings are destroyed they leave behind a big pile of rubble. Attackers found that, if anything, rubble was even worse to assault than the buildings it had replaced; instead of having obvious doors and windows to cover as they advanced, they found defenders might be lurking literally anywhere. Moving across large piles of loose rubble could be tricky, especially for multi-ton tanks!

MOVEMENT IN RUBBLE

Rubble counts as rough ground for movement purposes, but it offers additional perils for tracked vehicles moving across it. Tracked vehicles attempting to pick their way across irregular mounds of brick and concrete may slide sideways, ‘belly out’ or even crash through into cellars, sewers or other hidden voids beneath the rubble.

When a tracked vehicle is going to move across rubble that is above half the height of the vehicle model itself, declare their intended move and then roll on the rubble table the moment they start moving onto the rubble.

RUBBLE TABLE

Die Roll	Result
0	Crash: The vehicle crashes through the rubble and into a cellar or sewer beneath. The vehicle is removed and it counts as destroyed.
1-2	Bellied: The vehicle becomes temporarily immobilised by a protruding obstacle pushing against its belly armour and preventing the tracks from gripping. Roll another die to determine how far the vehicle actually moves across the rubble this turn before it becomes immobilised until its next activation. Any shooting at the vehicle from the front that rolls a natural 6 to hit will strike its exposed belly armour (counts as rear armour). The vehicle can attempt to move across rubble again next turn.
3-4	Slipped: The vehicle moves a short distance before slipping awkwardly sidewise or backwards. Roll another die to determine how far the vehicle actually moves across the rubble this turn. The vehicle can attempt to move across rubble again next turn.
5-6	Crunch: With its engine roaring and treads clattering the vehicle is free to move across the rubble without any incident this turn.

RUBBLE MODIFIERS

Heavy or Super-heavy tank:	-2
Light or Medium tank:	-1
Inexperienced crew:	-1
Veteran crew:	1

Rubble counts as hard cover when shot across at targets behind it, but when shooting against a unit that has the majority of its models inside the rubble, the following modifiers apply instead of the normal -2 hard cover modifier.

TARGET ORDERS	TO HIT MODIFIER
No orders, Ambush, or Down*	-3
Fire or Rally	-2
Advance	-1

*Cumulative with the Down modifier.

SHOOTING IN RUBBLE

The plentiful hiding places rubble provides means the hit modifier it provides for infantry occupying it depends on a unit's current orders, as it is very important what a squad is actually supposed to be doing when they come under fire inside rubble.



BUILDINGS

See the *Bolt Action* rulebook for rules on buildings (page 120). Any building that is more than 8" x 8" in size should be regarded as two (or more) buildings for game purposes. If you're lucky enough to have buildings models with interior details it can work well to treat each room, hallway and staircase as a separate 'building' in the case of a city fight.

ROADS AND OPEN GROUND

Roads and areas of open ground represent a rare opportunity for fast movement inside a city, but they can also be a deadly trap for units brought under fire. Hard surfaces can channel or ricochet bullets, blasts and shrapnel, and this, along with a stark absence of cover, means casualty rates are much higher in urban environments.

When rolling to damage infantry or soft-skinned vehicles that are on roads or open ground in a city fight add +1 Pen.



SEWER MOVEMENT

Outflanking units can also opt to try to move through the city sewers so that they can emerge just about anywhere. Only infantry squads, headquarters teams and sniper teams can use sewer movement.

The order test penalty to arrive when using sewer movement is doubled to -2 instead of the usual -1. If the test is successfully passed, the unit may use an Advance or

Run order to move onto the table from any ground-level point on the tabletop that is more than 6" away from any enemy model.

If a FUBAR result is rolled by a unit attempting to use sewer movement it gets hopelessly lost, suffocates or triggers a booby trap. The unfortunate unit is destroyed.

COMMAND AND CONTROL IN A CITY FIGHT

Another effect of urban terrain was the difficulty of maintaining adequate command and control. The chaotic landscape conspired to make runners and radios unreliable. Individual units could become pinned down for hours, waiting for orders or support. Snipers, infiltrators, booby traps and an uncertain frontline would quickly dissipate any forward momentum and wreck any chance of a coordinated attack. Action soon devolved into sporadic squad versus squad engagements over a single building or landmark.

To represent the effects of command breakdown, the players may agree to use the following rule in a city fight scenario. At the end of each turn one of each player's units must remain on Down or Ambush orders and their dice is not returned to the cup. If none of a player's units are currently on Down or Ambush orders, the opposing player may select one of their own units at the end of the turn and change their orders to Ambush or Down (in which

case the unit immediately loses a pin marker if it had one). Headquarters units may never be chosen for this purpose as their motivation and communications are generally superior.

This command breakdown effect is cumulative, so at the end of the second turn, two units must remain on Down or Ambush orders; at the end of the third turn, three units must remain on Down or Ambush, and so on.

The intended effect is that both players will have a shrinking number of units to activate each turn, but it doesn't limit exactly which units you can activate. This means a well-placed (or lucky unit) might be able to push deep into the enemy lines, but with fewer and fewer supporting units.

Because headquarters units are immune to this rule, a player's number of available order dice will never drop below their number of surviving headquarters units. So stack up on officers, medics and observers when going into a city – you're going to need them!



German Heer SiG33 15cm howitzer

CREDITS

WRITTEN BY

Roger Gerrish

EDITED BY

Alessio Cavatore, Paul Sawyer, Duncan MacFarlane

COVER ART BY

Peter Dennis

INTERIOR ART BY

Peter Dennis, Ronald Volstad, Richard Hook,
Mike Chappell

PHOTOGRAPHED BY

Derek Wyrozebski, Mark Owen, Anna Bereza

MINIATURES PAINTED BY

Andres Amian Fenandez, Darek Wyrozebski,
Stephen Huber, Neil Burt, Alan Mander

THANKS

John Stallard



Panzer VIII Maus super heavy tank